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THE



CORNHILL



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# THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER 1916.

*FLY LEAVES; OR TALES OF A FLYING PATROL.*

*B.E.F. 1915.*

*EXTRACTS FROM A PILOT'S LOG AND LETTERS HOME.*

## II.

We all wonder what the Dardanelles crowd are up to, and we aren't very happy about it, though we don't worry about it or anything else, which is the only sensible way of carrying on. We hope at home you don't worry about us. We were pretty sick, though, when our omelette was burned for breakfast t'other day.

We've been luckier, too. I have been up twice without being actually hit at all. I think they must have had a beano in the German lines, as they have been firing wildly! However, they will probably be sober to-morrow.

Weather better, but the country isn't as nice as at home. It is a rotten country, flat and ugly and very muddy. It is better to fight here, though, than at home. We sometimes wonder if England as a whole realizes this.

A party of Pilots went to see the 'Follies' at a city in France one wet afternoon. Great fun—Belgian refugee girls and officers acting in the Mairie, and very good they were. One day a shell hit the house next but one to the theatre—couldn't bother about the war then, though!—performance as usual. Another shot outed our best tea and sweet shop; it didn't matter much to us, as they had it transferred to another house, a day or two before our party went to the city, and Business was as Usual for us.

The last day or two the Huns were apparently short of ammunition for their anti-aircraft guns, but they have got heaps more now and also more guns, bother them. Otherwise, same old show.

Lately, we have been rather busy and have had some luck too. Heaps of photographing German trenches, gun positions, dépôts,

etc., along the firing line, and behind it for several miles. It is a nasty job, as one has to twist about a lot over one place, till all the photographs are taken, and all the while it is a soft job for 'Archies' and 'Crumps.' They have several on motor-lorries, and one attracts these too easily for comfort. However, the General Headquarters seem to like the result, which is a pity from our point of view, though one knows that the results of one's efforts are really useful, which is something.

A few days ago someone rang us up to say that there was a Hun Aviatik ranging with Wireless a heavy battery on to our trenches, so we were sent up, rather annoyed, as it was tea-time, and never expecting to see him. However, we managed to avoid him till he had climbed up, and then we started manœuvring. He was just going home, probably to drop messages, and we managed to cut across his bows, which frightened him (and us, too, for we got closer than we meant). Having been upset in this way he got excited and dived and turned, and side-slipped badly as he did so, and then we opened fire with our machine gun, which worried him even more, and we got on to his quarter and kept firing in bursts. He was doing ditto, but we shot the straighter, I suppose, as he eventually capsized and fell with his tail up into a wood, about seven miles behind their lines. Their 'Archies' were furious with us and went at us 'Mad Dog.' During the fight and manœuvring we did some ripping turns and twists and dives. It would give one creeps over an aerodrome, but then it didn't seem odd. We had fourteen holes in the wings, to the annoyance of our mechanics. Personally I would have them there rather than in the tanks or ourselves. The Hun had a fine aeroplane, but luckily for us he was none too good a pilot.

Dropping or shooting bombs on to fixed observation gas-bags is exciting, as they are well surrounded by 'Archies' and Maxims, and are very hard to hit too, but it annoys them a lot. Even if you don't hit them, they wind them down jolly quick and so can't carry on their job, which is something.

We've just had another joke with a cloud. We were hiding over it and had to dive through, to bomb someone below. The only drawback was, that we came out of the cloud edge on, and turning tiny circles like a top, without knowing how or why. After

careering in the beastly thing for five minutes or so without seeing a yard, and with the rain rapidly freezing on our wires, etc., our observer looked round rather blankly. However, we got out more or less over the right spot, laid our eggs with care and precision, and went home eventually, rather wet and very cold, to find everyone else very hot and dusty on the floor.

One night, as I may have told you before, we were rung up on the telephone to say that a Zeppelin was expected back from England at or about dawn, and that we were to proceed to strafe it. So the duty-pilot and one or two others got out of their warm blankets in the straw—much to their annoyance—and proceeded to put the final touches to their machines. The mechanics had been warned by the orderly sergeant, and the whole aerodrome was soon full of life and bustle, the work going on nearly as smoothly and quickly as in the daytime, though we were only allowed to use shaded lights.

At 1.45 A.M. we had a further message picked up by our wireless, giving us more detailed information as to the Zeppelin's movements. Three minutes later we were all in the air, whirring over the trees, which were only just becoming visible, silhouetted against the sky. It was a weird sight and an even more weird feeling, flying over the well-known country, which was practically invisible from above.

As we passed at a medium height over the German lines, they started shooting at us, or rather at the noise of our engines, for as they could hardly distinguish us against the dark sky, the shots went very wide. We were by this time spreading out by arrangement over a considerable tract of country, and yet were keeping in touch, so that if one of us saw our objective we should be able to concentrate for the attack in a few minutes. We eventually flew right over the sea, but luck was against us and the Zeppelin managed to avoid us. After flying about 150 miles in vain we came to the conclusion that he had probably cheated us, by flying back over Holland.

We met two Naval aeroplanes and one Frenchman also out on the Zep-strafe, and also sighted a prowling T.B.D. going N.E. looking for trouble.

On our way home we took a short cut over the country behind the German lines, and came across an Albatross, who was coming up from one of the well-known German aerodromes, for a flight

over our lines. He was much surprised at finding three of our fighting machines coming at him from behind his own lines, at an hour when all good people ought to have been asleep, and after being chased a short way while our machine guns were shooting at him, he dived straight for his aerodrome and presumably landed, as nothing more was seen of him.

Our engine was running rather weakly, as one cylinder had ceased to fire owing to a defective valve, so we gave up the chase and proceeded home to breakfast, dropping a few of the bombs intended for the Zeppelin on to one of the German headquarters on the way. We were fired at, of course, but the German gunners were obviously heavy with sleep and did not make good practice on the whole. One of our craft was unlucky, as the last shot struck its engine and completely demolished two of its cylinders, while a third was knocked off and fell just behind one of our infantry trenches, the occupants of which were much annoyed, and far too terrified to touch what they suspected to be an unexploded bomb. This cylinder has now been recovered and is one of the most cherished possessions of the pilot of the machine referred to. Luckily, when it happened, he was at a sufficient height to enable him to plane down comfortably in a field behind our lines, and he was none the worse for his close shave. The rest of his aeroplane was practically untouched. During this flight our observers were busy, too, watching the ground, and were able to bring back valuable reports of enemy doings which, we were told, were puzzling our Intelligence Staff.

A few days later, as the Germans produced a long-range gun and proceeded to lob some shells into our aerodrome, we had to clear out to another, which had previously been prepared in case of need, close to a town some ten miles off. We were just starting to fly there, and our motor transport was already on its way, when for some reason unknown to us we received new orders to fly to a large field, the other side of the same town, and when we got there to turn this field into an aerodrome.

As an example of how thorough the German spy system is, you will be interested to hear that on the same day several German bomb-droppers flew over and laid their eggs on the aerodrome to which we had originally intended to go. One or two temporary sheds had been put up the day before, but these were not occupied and no damage was done by the German bombs. It is curious that when the Germans came over, our fighting machines happened

to be busy elsewhere, and therefore they were undisturbed for the moment, and presumably dropped bombs on the spots ordered as a result of their spies' report.

We never heard why we were ordered to a different ground, but it was lucky for us that our orders were suddenly changed. All the same we were rather annoyed at the time, as making an aerodrome entails a great deal of work, including levelling the ground, cutting down belts of trees, filling up ditches where necessary, making drains, putting up huts, workshops, and temporary shelters for officers and men, erecting cooking places and a wireless station, and in this instance making a road about a quarter of a mile long, suitable for our heavy three-ton lorries. We also had to remove bodily a complete hop-garden with all its poles and wire, to take down 300 yards of telegraph poles, relay their eighteen wires under ground and fix up three separate telephone instruments in a hut and lay their wires,—this latter to the intense annoyance of all the subalterns, who have to take their turn as orderly officer and sleep in the hut. Of course, when one does get to sleep, at least one telephone is certain to ring up, usually with a perfectly fatuous message, but occasionally with important news or orders.

All this, naturally, was not done in a day, and made a good deal of extra work for all concerned, even with the help given us by the Royal Engineers, and some Belgians who were lent to us for the occasion.

We counted the number of bombs dropped by the Germans, and next day some of us went out and dropped double that number on one of their aerodromes which we took care to make sure was occupied! The last bomb to be dropped was a large football, which we heard afterwards caused great consternation among the Germans, as it bounced and rolled over their ground. It really must have been a comic sight to see the fatter Huns rushing away from it. My propeller had been shot through again on the way back, and it threatened to disintegrate at any moment, which wasn't exactly cheering, though by flying very carefully we got home all right.

It is rather curious that this is the third propeller that has been damaged by shell and rifle fire; one, we managed to repair satisfactorily, but the others were too bad to do anything with, so we scrapped them, and amused ourselves by making a couple of walking-sticks out of the sound parts. These will be interesting relics, and are in themselves quite pretty, as they were cut out in such a way as to show the several laminations or strata of walnut and mahogany of which the propellers were made. By way of further

ornament, the ferrules of the sticks are made of old pistol cartridge-cases, the bullets from which were fired at a German during one of our successful air duels. The handle of each stick holds a pencil, fixed into a cartridge case, which was used in our machine gun on the same occasion. Other people have made sticks, paper-knives, and so on, of damaged oak skids and ash struts, but the propeller ones are the best !

During the recent foggy weather, two of us went up to confer with some gunners, about a new target which we had discovered for one of the heavy batteries, and when we were with the battery we had a fine first-hand view of a modern long-range artillery duel. The way the gunners worked under severe shell-fire was marvellous. They handled their clumsy weapon with astonishing rapidity, and although they could not see the German gun they apparently knocked it out, as after about half an hour its fire diminished, became wild, and finally stopped altogether. Our gunners were very lucky, as although several big H.E.s pitched fairly close, no one was hurt, and then we all went and had a peaceful and excellent lunch together.

On the way back, I received a very smart salute from a man who was apparently a private in the R.A.M.C. Somehow, his appearance was familiar, and on looking again, whom should I discover but a man who had been my tutor at Oxford ! We had a long talk over past times and wished we were both back by the banks of the Isis. He could not fight himself, and I think it is one of the most sporting things I have ever heard of, for a man to spend his vacation in France as a private, frequently under fire, while during term he goes back to his academical work and also puts in some two hours a day in a munition factory. Surely this is a magnificent example to the slackers who yet remain in England.

The Germans were getting rather too enterprising over part of the lines, a good deal to the north of where we usually operate, so one day we moved for the night to a temporary field fifty miles up. As soon as we heard by telephone, next morning, that the Germans were coming over, the five of us, acting on a pre-arranged plan, made an enveloping movement, and got right behind their lines to attack their machines from the rear. It was really much more exciting than it sounds, and I for one never expected to get back at all. The shelling was appalling, and, as there was not much of a battle on the ground that day, the air was thick with projectiles

from other batteries, as well as from the usual anti-aircraft guns.

First to the north, then swinging round on a large right-handed circle to the east, then south and finally west, we flew, covering some forty miles, before seeing an enemy machine, and being under fire ourselves all the time. The others had various courses allotted to them, and I do not think we did badly in arriving at the rendezvous within two and a half minutes of each other, and of course at varying heights. We then went in line abreast due westward, that is towards our own lines, chasing three or four Huns before us. We engaged them all, one after the other, and gave them the fright of their lives. They were all knocked about a bit, one being smashed up completely, and another landing very precipitously on a bad bit of country and smashing his machine in doing so. We were lucky in not losing a single 'plane, though several of us were kept busy for the next day or two with repairs. It was a great hunt and most interesting, though it is a wonder that we all got home alive; it achieved its object, too, as although we went home to our other district next day, no German machine showed its nose in that part of the country for about a fortnight, during which time our troops were enabled to make many important changes, both of guns and men, without being bothered by German machines watching them.

Many thanks for your letter. I will try and answer your question as to clouds. One's balance in clouds is very hard to keep, as one can see nothing at all; and it is quite possible, and indeed common, to feel 'balanced,' though the machine may be flying with one wing higher than the other, or even standing on a wing-tip, provided that one is turning at the correct speed and with the correct amount of helm. This is how all ordinary turns are made in the open air, the angle of heel depending on the speed and rate of turn. Balance, both when flying straight and when turning, is maintained by the use of the rudder and also by the balancing ailerons, which are movable flaps at the extremities of each wing. When one cannot see, one can only tell whether one is turning or not by watching the compass-card, but this is no longer a reliable guide when the machine gets violently jerked about, or is making sudden turns and twists, as the compass-card is apt to jamb and then, on getting free, to swing round large arcs. Consequently, when, as is usual in some clouds, the air in the cloud is moving in large or small eddies, one is apt to lose one's sense of direction. Unbalance is



also corrected by the use of the rudder as well as the ailerons ; and if this, as often happens, alters the course, and one does not know in which direction one is turning, owing to the whole machine getting thrown about, the aeroplane may assume an attitude which is far from being horizontal. The situation is further complicated by the fact that the effects of the fore-and-aft control by means of the elevator, and the horizontal control, which I have tried to describe, get mixed, at angles of thirty to forty degrees of heel, and beyond that get more or less interchanged ; therefore, when one cannot see, it is very hard to know the position in which the machine is, at any given moment, and the chief guides to safety, beyond the whistle of the wind and the singing of the rigging-wires, are Instinct and Practice. It is really rather like steering blindfold a small sailing boat in a backwash, with eddies and squalls coming on suddenly. One can only hear and feel, but after all these senses are the chief helps to a bird's instinct. Rain, and air pockets, which are really squalls and currents of air moving in different directions from the main true wind, make flying more hazardous, but all the same much more interesting.

I am afraid all this isn't very clear, but it is difficult to answer your questions satisfactorily, without being too technical and boring.

There was a certain Hun Observation Kite Balloon, commonly known as a 'Sausage,' which lived just out of the range of our guns, in a clearing behind a wood quite close to a railway line ; like its brethren it used to go up and stare impertinently across the trenches at our proceedings. It was difficult to attack it, as it was immediately hauled down on the approach of any English aeroplane, and when on the ground it offered a very small target for our bombs ; furthermore, it was surrounded by one or two 'Archies' and a battery of machine guns. However, one day last week, when there was a strong breeze and the clouds were low and patchy, we went up for a 'Strafe.' The balloon was at about 2000 feet, and the clouds 3000 or 4000 ; we, of course, flew above the clouds, and, diving down through a small gap in them, looked for the 'Sausage.' Unfortunately, we had slightly overshot its position, and the Sausagers saw us first, announcing the fact by means of an 'Archie' under our tail. Swinging round, we made for the balloon, which was being wound down as fast as possible ; in our haste our bomb went wide, but, as luck would have it, hit the railway line alongside it and must have provided some occupation for the German



sappers, besides (let us hope) delaying Fritz's dinner in the trenches. There was nothing left for us but to run away and play somewhere else, so, paying them the compliment of a few rounds from our machine gun, we went back into the clouds; and, returning in ten minutes' time, we found the Sausage up again. Down goes a bomb, down goes the Sausage, up comes Archie, back we go into our aerial shelter. Ten minutes later, the same 'turn' is repeated. Another ten minutes, methodical Hun, expecting us, keeps his balloon down, but sends up his Archie, through the clouds, to burst above them. Quite a good idea on his part, but we also had thought of that and weren't there!

However, we came back five minutes later, and met old Sausage coming up, amid a terrific fusillade from the floor; over go our last bombs, with a few nicknacks in the shape of shrapnel grenades, and down it goes again. We must have damaged somebody or something pretty considerably that time, because it was never seen afterwards; so our game of hide-and-seek wasn't altogether fruitless, besides providing us with a good deal of amusement, and the Huns' winder with plenty of hard work.

Just now it is hot, misty and thunderstormy—bad for flying, so we are having rather an easier time for the moment and I have more time for writing.

I think I told you that I was about due for some leave, but the powers that be have arranged for more 'Hate and Frightfulness' just now, so all leave for us poor flyers has been cancelled; isn't it too sickening?

We have not bagged any more Huns lately, but we have chased another and very nearly got caught by one of their rocket batteries. This is a new form of German Frightfulness and we have not quite learnt its ways yet, but no doubt we shall soon get accustomed to them. The rockets are very much larger than the biggest fireworks that I have ever seen, even on the last day of Henley Regatta or at the Crystal Palace. Some of them carry a charge of high-explosive in their heads, and others rely on doing damage by their incendiary effect. They come up an extraordinary height and are fired from the ground in bouquets of about half a dozen at a time. They spread out a little and are apparently timed to burst at different heights. All one sees when attacked is a bright spot of light which shoots up from the ground. It is not insuperably

difficult to dodge one or even two, but then one probably runs into the third; this, at least, is the German theory. I do not think they have got any of our aeroplanes yet, although they are effective, by making it not worth while to fly too low over them, risking our own machine, in pursuit of Germans, who are always trying to lead us over a string of these rocket stations.

It is getting even harder than ever to catch a Hun, but there is no doubt that we do stop a lot of their work, and it must be a big strain on them, always expecting to be swooped down upon by what the French call 'un avion de chasse,' which is what we are: they *do* dislike us so!

Three of us were sent over to General Headquarters the other day and we met several old friends, including my old Colonel, who is now running a cavalry brigade. We had a jolly dinner-party in the Café Vincent, where there was a real live piano which was in great request, especially when the two daughters of Monsieur le Patron agreed to take their turns at playing and singing. This was a welcome change from our primitive existence in a barn, and after dinner we had a whole bed each to sleep in, the sheets being the first we had seen for many a long day. The dinner, needless to say, was an improvement on our ration meals, admirable as these really are, especially when eked out by the welcome addition of supplies from home.

I wonder what sort of 'Fourth of June' celebrations were going on at home yesterday. We had heard that some enterprising Old Etonians in the Guards were having a special 'Hate' in the evening, so on our way back from work, a couple of us flew over the German trenches to try to imitate the fireworks by dropping a few H.E. bombs, alternately with some coloured lights and smoke bombs. I do not know how the Procession of Boats was worked, but possibly some of the barges bringing up stores on the canal thought they were doing the right thing.

My old machine, as you know, has had a roughish time and been knocked about a good deal. Last time I was up, I had two of the main tail-booms shot through, and as a new machine had just arrived from England I was told to take it over. It is undoubtedly a much better aeroplane, flies nearly ten miles an hour faster and looks very nice, with its brand-new wings and unspotted varnish; all the same, I was quite sorry at having to give up my poor old

bus. I had got very fond of it, in much the same sort of way as one used to feel about one's old chargers. As a consolation, I was told to fly the machine back to England, where it was to be used for school work. This felt like sending one's old horse to a job-master's yard for anyone to knock about.

As luck would have it, however, there was to be no joy-ride back to 'Blighty,' as all leave was suddenly cancelled, owing to a projected move on the part of a couple of divisions, which had to be accomplished without disturbance from enemy aircraft, so we had to spend a few dull days patrolling the air in such strength that no German dare come over the district.

It was a curious and a sad sight flying over Ypres the other day. The Germans had started a furious cannonade on this unfortunate town, and although the whole place seemed a wreck, there was apparently enough left to make the biggest bonfire I have ever seen. Whole blocks of houses were burning furiously and the smoke made an enormous cloud which very slowly drifted away over the German lines. Even at the height at which we were, the smell was quite noticeable, and part of our wings had a fine coating of soot, which had stuck to the oil that had oozed out over them. After the fire had died down, the red-hot interiors of the roofless houses glowed upwards with a strange radiance, which lit up the evening sky, very much like a brilliant Turner sunset.

A few days later, one of the inquisitive visitors, who somehow or another manage at times to get passes from the War Office to come and see the show out here, was sent to us from somebody on the Headquarters Staff, with the request that we would take him in a car and let him 'see life.' He had not 'bought his ham,' and it was soon obvious that he had been pushed on to us merely because he was a nuisance to everyone else. As our machine was in dock that day, Henry and I were told off to take him in a car to see the battle, with strict orders not to let him get hurt; but at the same time it was unofficially hinted that we might do worse than frighten him as much as possible, so that he and his type would not be so anxious to come again. We took him along a road, and stopping the car, as if it had broken down, just in front of a heavy battery which we knew was just getting ready to shoot, we told him that the road at this place was likely to be shelled, and pointed out a very, very muddy ditch into which we advised him to go as soon as the shells came, while we busied ourselves, or pretended to do so, with the innards of our car. Suddenly: Bang! from the gun

the other side of the hedge. Our London sportsman, thinking his end had come, took the most perfect toss into the ditch. After a bit, we hove him out and drove on to the neighbouring village of S—, which was more or less in ruins, although at present it was out of range. As luck would have it, some sappers were demolishing a house, and we got there in time to see a shower of bricks and dust fall down in front of us. Pointing to one of our own reconnaissance aeroplanes overhead, on its way out to the trenches, we explained to our guest that this was none other than the redoubtable Hans, bomb dropping, and that as he was a good shot, we were rather lucky that his bomb hit the house and not us!

It was as much as we could do to prevent ourselves laughing, but in his terror he never noticed our convulsions. He wanted to go home, but we declared that it would be sheer lunacy to attempt to go back the way we had come, and that we must at all costs go on; besides, he had asked to see 'war,' and as we were enjoying ourselves thoroughly we were jolly well going to see that he did!

We then went on into Wipers, the poor fellow cowering with fear at the explosion of some German live shells, which were actually falling into the far end of the town. It was a most interesting sight and a glorious chance for a camera. I wish we had had one with us, but of course they are not allowed. I cannot describe the utter ruin and desolation of the place, but there is hardly a house left standing, the Cathedral and Cloth Hall have been badly battered by big H.E. shells, most of the town has been thoroughly burnt out and completely demolished, and the streets are littered with ruins.

Eventually we went home, without ragging the Londoner any more, as he had long ago been reduced to a state of pulp. On getting back to our billets, he absorbed a vast quantity of our best drinks, said he had enjoyed himself immensely and was much interested, and was delivered back whence he came—very drunk! We were vastly amused at our afternoon off and have often wondered what the hero said to his Trade Union, or whatever his show was, when he got back to Blighty.

We had a great fight this morning with a new and strange type of German battle-plane. We had heard of it before, when it was on its trials, but had never seen it. It goes by the name of the 'Two-tailed Bogie,' owing to its having two fuselages or tails instead of one, with an engine of about 150 horse-power at the forrard end of

each. In between, is a nacelle containing three persons, one of whom pilots and the other two work the machine guns, which fire both fore and aft. It is a great, big, heavy biplane with enormous wings, much larger than anything we have out here at the moment. Some people say that besides the two tractor propellers there is a third pusher engine and propeller, mounted at the tail end of the nacelle, but I do not credit this myself. Its speed is about ninety miles an hour, so it is bigger, faster and more heavily armed than our own fighters, of which we are so fond. The crab of it apparently is that it is clumsy and very difficult to manoeuvre, and so loses much of its other advantages. The Huns brag about it a good deal, yet none of them have dared to come and fight us over our own lines. We always have to do our fighting over the German lines, which is of course a big handicap.

I think you know that the machine which I am now flying is a 100 horse-power 'pusher' biplane, armed at present with a machine gun, rifle, and two pistols.

It was Jack's turn to do the early morning run last Sunday, but there was something amiss with his engine, so Roger and I volunteered to take his turn. We arrived at the aerodrome about 4 o'clock, found the mechanics had got our new machine quite ready, and, picking up our orders from the office, we were soon off. It was one of those lovely summer mornings when it was almost a pity to stay in bed, and it seemed an awful shame to have to go and disturb peaceful Nature; yet our orders said that we were to bomb two railway stations and a new motor-transport dépôt which had been started some ten miles behind the German lines, as well as to do a reconnaissance over a certain area. Visibility being good, we went straight up to 8000 feet and made for the railway station. We happened to be the first machine out that morning, and the air had not been disturbed and the canvas covers were on the anti-aircraft guns, while their crews were probably still asleep, so we did not have very much trouble to start with from Archie. We had been flying well over an hour and had dropped all our bombs, when we suddenly saw another aeroplane coming towards us from the East. As it was not being shelled, we felt sure it was hostile, and had apparently been sent for by some German Staff Officers who had seen us bombing. When first we saw it, it was about two miles off and some little distance below us, climbing all the time. In a quarter of a minute we had spotted that it was the untried but redoubtable 'Two-tails,' and the question was, what

to do? We knew it to be a more powerful and better armed machine than ours, and also faster, and could therefore catch us up and force an action, whether we wished it or not, before we could get back behind our own lines, where we felt sure it would not follow us. The unknown thing about it was, whether its crew could fight it, so we thought the best thing to do was to go and find out. We were, of course, ready for instant action, and as Roger had been with me several times and had always done extraordinarily well, I felt that if we were knocked out, at any rate it would not be his fault. Having got rid of our bombs and a good deal of petrol, we were fairly light, and making the old machine sit on her tail, we climbed upwards as fast as we could and went straight for 'Two-tails.' Our height was now between 8000 and 9000 feet and the guns on the ground had ceased fire. Very soon after, we heard the bow gun of 'Two-tails' start tap-tap-tapping. Roger merely turned round and grinned, and did not reply. We were then getting to within a couple of hundred yards of 'Two-tails,' who, using his extra speed, tried a turn, in order to bring his after gun to bear on the beam. This did not suit us a bit, so by diving to get momentarily increased speed, and at the same time turning sharply, we got to within 150 yards and opened fire at once. I suppose the Boche pilot thought a collision was imminent, for he tried a sudden swerve, but only succeeded in making a partial turn with a considerable side-slip. We had found out 'Two-tails'' weakness: he could not manœuvre easily, so we were both much happier, although the odds against us were still heavy. We had several bullets too close for comfort, but Roger took no notice and methodically worked his gun. Suddenly we noticed the port-bow gun of the enemy cease fire, and at the moment it was the only gun that could bear on us. We had apparently smashed up the gun or the gunner—it never spoke again. Good work, that!

We made another dive and thought we had got him, but just before we passed under his keel, Roger let loose a yell of rage, and turning round with a look of despair on his face, he gave the signal that his gun had jambed. There was nothing left but to try and discontinue the action, but of course the German had no intention of letting us do that. For the next five minutes or so we had an exciting chase, in which our manœuvring power was backed against the German's extra speed. Occasionally we fired a few rounds of revolver ammunition at him, when he managed to get close enough, and he was firing at us with his remaining machine gun, whenever he could bring it to bear. All this time Roger was working away



at our gun—he took it completely to pieces and, having extracted the remains of a faulty cartridge from its interior, reassembled the mechanism—not a bad performance under fire, in an aeroplane that was continually climbing, diving, twisting, or turning. When he signalled that he was again ready, we went straight at the German, who suspected nothing. At about 100 yards or so we let the gun rip, and to our great joy saw one of the enemy's engines stop and its propeller remain stationary in the air, the machine at once giving a great lurch which the Hun pilot could hardly correct, with one engine and one gun knocked out—the score was all square and two to play.

But 'Two-tails' had lost his speed, which was now less than ours, and his manœuvring power was even worse than it had been. It was not so difficult as before to keep out of the line of fire of his gun, and apparently very soon afterwards the pilot was knocked out, as the machine fell about and was obviously flying by itself, entirely uncontrolled, but, having a large amount of inherent stability, it did not fall headlong. We still kept hard at it and eventually 'Two-tails' flew more reasonably. The other gun also ceasing fire, we concluded that their third hand was trying to pilot the machine, which by this time was heading for home. We chased it down 4000 feet, till it was falling earthwards out of control; and although we did not actually see it touch the ground, it must have smashed up completely when it did so. The whole fight lasted about a quarter of an hour and was the best scrap we have had so far—I wish it had been over our own lines instead of theirs, as then 'Two-tails' would have come down at a place where we should have been able to examine it carefully and in detail.

The damage done to us was slight, so after tidying things up, as best we could in the air, we proceeded to carry out the rest of our reconnaissance orders, which took us over a spot that we knew to be infested by 'Archies,' who had of course been watching the defeat of their much advertised battle-plane and were consequently ready for us. There were four guns shooting at us, as we were cruising up and down looking for movements or new earthworks. We soon found out that three of them made pretty good shooting and more or less kept together, while the fourth was hopelessly bad. We could generally depend on the accuracy of the first three, and consequently we could calculate where their projectiles would be likely to explode; by altering course, after the shells had left the guns, and before they burst, we managed to dodge them; but the fourth was incalculable and too erratic to worry about—he never got within miles of us,

until one fluke shot from him exploded quite close to our fuel tank and knocked several holes in it. We were then at a height of a little under 4000 feet, and still well behind the German lines. The engine stopped suddenly from lack of spirit, and the next thing I saw was burning petrol rushing between my legs. The petrol in the tank, being under pressure, was squirted over the planes and tail, and poured into the nacelle, in which both of us were sitting, until it became a roaring furnace.

We had to get down as quickly as we could, to avoid being burnt to death. If we were too slow in coming down, the half-consumed remains of the aeroplane would have fallen with us; on the other hand, if we went too fast, the spars and tail, weakened by the burning, would have broken under the enormous extra strain that very high speed always involves. These thoughts rushed through my mind; the dilemma was awkward and had to be solved quickly, and indeed neither of us ever expected to get out of it alive. The blazing petrol soaked into our clothes, so that we ourselves became as it were the wick in a spirit lamp. The agony was awful, and we were also nearly suffocated by the fumes. Luckily, my glasses did not entirely collapse, so that my sight was still sufficient to steer by, though one eye was temporarily done in. We came down pretty fast, and the speed indicator showed well over 100 miles an hour before it was burnt away. Turning round, I saw the tail, rudder and elevator burning furiously, and it was most doubtful if it were possible to prevent the machine in its flaming state from crashing nose first into the ground. If it had done so from such a height, there would have been nothing left of us to bury. It was perfect Hell, but all the same we had much to be thankful for. In the first place we had got rid of all our bombs; of course, had one of these been in the machine when she was on fire, there would have been nothing left at all except a Bang! We were also extraordinarily lucky, in that, although we had some fifty odd cartridges of ball ammunition for our machine gun left, after our bout with 'Two-tails,' and perhaps a dozen for our revolvers, and although it all went off, round by round in the heat, the bullets crashing through the steel and wood of the framework in all directions, yet not one hit either of us.

By the grace of God, we just managed to miss the German trenches, and to land a few yards on our side of the battle line,—in fact the first earth that we touched was the parapet of one of our front line trenches. In another ten seconds the tail and the controlling planes would have had insufficient grip of the air to keep the



machine under control, and I don't think that I could have stuck it much longer myself; my eyes and arms were just equal to making a decent landing, and that was about all. As for Roger, he was worse off still, for he had nothing to do but sit tight and let himself be burnt; his pluck and grit were wonderful. If he had tried to obey his natural instinct and escape from the fire, he would undoubtedly have wrecked the aeroplane and killed us both.

Barely conscious, he got out of the machine as we came to a standstill, crawled a few yards clear and then collapsed. I tried to get out by means of the ordinary step, but it had burnt away and I fell down, catching my left leg in one of the bracing-wires. This leg had previously been twice slightly hit by shrapnel, but in the greater agony I had hardly noticed it.

Once clear of the machine, half suffocated, I rolled on the ground to put out the flames in my clothing, and I remember seeing the aeroplane crumble to bits in a heap on the ground, as the main struts and spars were burnt through. I am told that we fainted, and that we were then carried back on stretchers by some extremely plucky stretcher-bearers of the Rifle Brigade and Leinsters, to their regimental dressing-station, under a heavy shrapnel fire. The German Field Artillery were very quick in opening fire on the wrecked aeroplane, almost immediately after we landed, but although one fuse fell a couple of feet away from us, and was promptly put, still hot, in my pocket by a kind s.b., we were not hit.

Apart from the surprise of being still alive, it was a great relief to find ourselves among friends, as we were particularly anxious to land within our own lines, so that the information gathered by Roger might be utilised, and also that the Huns might be spared the pleasure of capturing us, or our aeroplane.

A party of our mechanics went to look at the wreckage, later on, and we heard that there was hardly anything left, except some charred wood, and metal framework burnt to pieces and riddled with bullet holes.

We were taken, partly by stretcher and partly by ambulance, to a dressing-station, where we were very well looked after, and where we made out our report; but, as neither of us could see or write clearly, a kind Doctor-man took it down for us.

Thanks to the leather clothing which both of us wore, we were not burnt as much as might have been expected.

We were told that when the fiery aeroplane was descending over the trenches, the men all rushed into their dug-outs, as they

could hear the frightful whistle it made in its rush downwards through the air, looking like an enormous comet gone wrong! They thought it was a new form of German 'frightfulness,' and, as we passed only a few feet over the heads of some of them, their feelings may be imagined. Two men, quite oblivious of the war for the moment, were making tea in their trench, and the first intimation they had of our arrival, was their parapet being knocked on to their heads by our wheels, and capsizing their 'dixie.' The use of the Flying Corps wasn't obvious to them, just then; in fact they were quite angry. There is a comic element in most things, but sometimes it needs a little looking for.

We were not yet free from Hunnish Hate, as our motor ambulance succeeded in running into a covey of shrapnel, but luckily no one was touched. When we got to another R.A.M.C. dépôt, at a château a few miles back, to have our wounds redressed, a Hun Heavy loosed off some half-dozen rounds, the last one of which pitched into the garden, a few yards outside the window of the room where we were lapping up morphia, anti-tetanus-bugs, champagne, brandy and any other medical comforts we could get hold of. Fortunately, this shell was a 'dud'; if it had exploded, the surgeon's labours would have been in vain, and no one could have sorted us out from the other rubbish littered about.

This is the last I shall see or hear of German guns for a bit, as we are now safely in hospital at Boulogne, and shall, we hope, be back in Blighty before long. They are treating us awfully well, and although we are bandaged in most places, we are more comfortable than might be expected. Both eyes and hands being tied up makes writing impossible, but the good padre is doing it for me. Our General has just been in to see us, and has been most frightfully kind. He told the tale to the G.O.C. in C. at G.H.Q., and brought us a nice message from him. So now nothing is left, except to look forward to the day when we shall cross the Channel (in a different and more alarming way than last time!), and fetch up for overhaul at Sister Agnes', one of the few bright spots in dirty old London.

And very nice too!

[THE END.]

## CHARALAMPIA.

(From the Greek of Trachylides, written not earlier than 1438.)

CHARALAMPIA was born on Wednesday, October 15, A.D. 581. It seems a long time ago, but, after all, it is not so long as if it had been 581 B.C.

Her parents were very respectable. In fact she was generally called 'Princess' Charalampia, but this was not right, for her father was only a duke. She had neither brother nor sister, and was a real Porphyrogenita. The true children of the Dukes of Petraia were always born in the great bed-chamber, of which the walls and colonnades were made of Porphyry; and the Porphyry was so highly polished that it shone like a purple looking-glass.

In A.D. 596 Charalampia was fifteen years old, and very tall for her age. Her hair was as if one had beaten gold and copper together. She had pleasant apartments at the north-west of the Palace, and her sitting-room looked out across the Palace Square. The Square was very large and covered with gravel. On the far side was the Ministry of War, with a high tower, and beside it rose the dome of the Myrelaion—a church in which a council of bishops had met to settle doctrine a few years before.

Charalampia had a garden of her own, planted with quinces, mulberries, and fig-trees; there was also a great cedar, whose boughs looked in half-lights like wreaths of hanging peat-smoke. Mohair blinds were let down above her windows when the sun was too hot; but Charalampia could look under the blinds and watch the aides-de-camp on horseback as they came cantering across the dusty Square with messages for her father.

Her mother died ten years earlier, and Charalampia was left under the direction of Sophrosyne, an old *gouvernante*.

Charalampia was now no longer a child, she had grown up into a young woman; and as she grew up she became wayward and headstrong. She chafed at being confined to the house, or to her garden; though even if she had been allowed to go out there were not many places to which she could have made a picnic, for the country round was treeless and there were marauding tribes in the neighbourhood. She did not see her father very often, but he had given her an Arab pony so that she could ride in the Avenue of

Pepper-trees, which was within the precincts of the Palace. He also fitted up a book-case of sandalwood against the back wall of her sitting-room and put illuminated Persian manuscripts in the pigeon-holes so that she might practise herself in that language. But Charalampia took little heed of the manuscripts, except to look in the borders of the pages at the pictures of knights clothed with vermillion, and of almond-eyed ladies who sat on striped divans with their lutes.

One day there was a fanfare of trumpets in the Square, and Charalampia looking out under the mohair sun-blind saw a knight riding on a black gennet with a great retinue approaching the Palace. He wore a high turban with a diamond aigrette at the side, which is a sign of exalted rank. Charalampia ran to look out with such haste that she upset the small table at which she sat with her *gouvernante*. The lesson-book which they were studying was the 'Aphorisms of Poliorcetopoulos,' and it fell upon the floor.

A few minutes later her father the Duke came into the room. He seldom entered Charalampia's apartment except on important occasions, being a gloomy and very religious man since his wife's death. 'Revered Sophrosyne,' he said, 'the Prince of Caucasia has come to demand Charalampia's hand in marriage, and I desire you to bring her to the Hall of the Thousand Lamps in an hour's time.'

The Prince was twenty-one years old, and of a prepossessing countenance. He talked amiably to Charalampia and begged her acceptance of a small bottle made of onyx with a sapphire stopper. It contained some drops of a fine attar of inestimable value. After a few minutes' conversation the *gouvernante* took Charalampia back to her apartment, and the Prince discussed his proposal with the Duke. He said that he was content with Charalampia's appearance and deportment, and would report in her favour to his father the King: but he desired to know whether she could speak Persian, as there were many Persians on the confines of the King's dominions and his father considered it necessary that the lady who married the heir-apparent should speak their language. The Duke answered: 'I have given my daughter fine Persian manuscripts, and I have no doubt she has studied them carefully. I will ask her *gouvernante* what progress she has made.'

He went again to Charalampia's apartment and said: 'Revered Sophrosyne, the Prince of Caucasia is content with my daughter's appearance and deportment, but says that his wife must speak the Persian tongue. Will you inform me what progress Charalampia

has made with it ?' 'Alas ! Most Noble Duke,' said Sophrosyne, 'your August Daughter has made but little progress with the Persian tongue. She grows wayward and headstrong, and has not studied the manuscripts which you have given her, except to look at the knights clothed in vermilion on the borders of the pages.'

Then the Duke saw the 'Aphorisms of Poliorcetopoulos' lying on the floor, and said sternly : 'Foolish daughter ! can you not concentrate your attention even on every-day Greek, but must fling on the floor Poliorcetopoulos' "Aphorisms," which, after all, is little better than light fiction ?'

Then Charalampia, forgetting her manners and not even addressing her father as 'Most Noble Duke,' said pertly : 'I do not find the "Aphorisms of Poliorcetopoulos" a light story-book ; and as for Persian, I shall have plenty of time to study it later' ; for she never doubted but that she would soon be Princess of Caucasia. 'I am young and do not want to be mewed up all my life in Petraia, but to see the world.'

So you may perceive how wayward and headstrong was Charalampia.

Her father flung out of the room in displeasure ; and Sophrosyne picked up the book and said : 'August Pupil, you act unwisely, for to-day you have such an opportunity of learning Persian as may never come gain.'

The Prince of Caucasia, hearing that Charalampia could not speak Persian, said that he must report the circumstance to the King, and would in any case refrain from pressing his suit for one year.

The next day Charalampia saw under her sun-blinds the dust raised by the Prince's retinue as he rode away.

'Let him go,' said she, 'and a good riddance !' But at heart she was vexed : first because it seemed a slight to herself, and second because the Prince of Caucasia would have been a noble match for anyone, and lastly because in a few minutes he had captivated her, for he was the first young man with whom she ever had spoken. But she returned another answer to herself, saying, as she sat before her mirror at bedtime : 'I know why it is that he has gone away, Sophrosyne. It is because of my freckles. Why should I be freckled ? You are to find me a salve to take them away. Do you hear ? Find me a salve.'

The Duke of Petraia called his Grand Silentary—a very learned and devout man—and said : 'Wise and Virtuous Silentary, I have

need of your counsel. My August Daughter Charalampia waxes wayward and headstrong. She does not seriously study the Persian tongue, and pays little heed to the reproofs of her *gouvernante*, the Revered Sophrosyne. Even now she says, using a very vulgar expression, that she does not wish to be "mewed up" in Petraia, but to see the world. What do you counsel, Wise and Virtuous Father ?'

The Grand Silentiary reflected and said : ' Most Noble Duke, indolence is too common in the young, and the desire to see the world is natural to them. It seems to me possible to combine travel with a proper study of the Persian language. There is a Convent of the Acemites outside the walls of Panormium where the Nuns receive guests and give instruction. The August Charalampia could study there for a few months. The change of air would no doubt be beneficial, and she would find instruction in the Persian language. The House is dedicated to the Panachrantos and is delicately situate with a spacious cloister and a shady Paradise in which to walk. Your August Daughter would there see as much of the world as it is convenient for a lady of her station to see.'

Charalampia did not hear of all this till arrangements were made for her reception. ' They are mad,' she said angrily, ' to send me to a convent to see the world ! I will not go !'

But the Duke came at dusk on the evening of the Nativity of the Panagia, to tell her that her escort would start at sunrise the next morning, and that the Silentiary himself, as well as Sophrosyne, would form part of her retinue.

' August Pupil,' said Sophrosyne, ' do not repine. Providence orders all things well. The journey to Panormium will take six days and is of much interest. Furthermore, I have made inquiries about a salve for freckles, and find that only one certain cure exists. It was discovered by Paulus, an Holy Latin Hermit, who gave it to Queen Poliphile on the condition that she would build him a stone cell by the Lake of Astyanax. Now, on our journey we shall pass by the Lake of Astyanax, so you also may find an opportunity to obtain the same remedy from the Holy Hermit.'

By this Charalampia was somewhat consoled ; but in any case she would have been obliged to go, for her father had provided fifty horsemen for her escort, and had given them secret orders that they were not to permit of any delay.

The Silentiary rode upon her right, and Sophrosyne on her left. After the sun was high enough to dispel the mist and to show the sea on the one side, and on the other the peak of Gheziltash



on which the first snows had already fallen, Charalampia began to feel the beauty of the scene. The purple colour of the sea reminded her of the Porphyry Chamber in the Palace at Petraia. 'It is indeed a beautiful scene,' said the Silentiary, 'and you very properly admire it. Travel is like life—you must take notice of everything, and make the most of Occasion. "He shall drink of the brook in the way, therefore shall he lift up his head." You know not when you may reach the next well.' 'Silly old man!' said Charalampia to herself (for she was used to express herself waywardly), 'he has forgotten what it was like to be young.' But the Silentiary thought: 'Silly young woman! I fear she will never learn wisdom.'

By two o'clock of the next day the cavalcade had reached the hamlet of Astakia, where there is a grass lawn shaded by a group of plane-trees. A travelling-tent was set up for Charalampia, and she sat in her chair at the door of the tent enjoying the coolness of the ancient plane-trees, which are some of the finest in the country.

An old man with a very long white beard saw her as he walked along the bridle-path, and turned aside towards the shadow.

'Gracious Lady,' he said, 'I am a very old man and have walked up from the Creek of Hephaestio—may I rest a little while in the shadow of these trees?' 'It would be more becoming,' answered Charalampia, 'that you should rest with the soldiers—my escort—who lie across the brook in the valley below.'

'Gracious Lady,' he said, 'I have in this rush-bag two fine lobsters which I caught this morning at the top of the creek: may I sell them to you?' and he shook them out on the sward before her. Charalampia was very fond of lobsters, but had never seen any so fine as these. Their shells were of a chastely mottled coral red, and their boiled eyes stood out like beads of jet. She would have bought them at once, but thought it not meet for her position to bargain, and said: 'You should address yourself to my Purveyor who lies with the soldiers on the far side of the brook.'

So the old man walked away.

When the sun was setting and they were encamped for the night, the cook brought an evening meal of dried fish, lettuces, and blanchmange. Then Charalampia remembered the lobsters. 'I sent an old man to the Purveyor with two lobsters this afternoon; bring them for our evening meal.' The servant went to fetch them, but came back with a message that no lobsters had been brought to the Purveyor, nor indeed had any old man been seen in the camp. He must have passed by some other way.

Then Charalampia was angry, and flung the dried fish—which

are called Chiros—on to the floor. 'I will not eat these things!' she said, and so went supperless to bed. But all the while there was a refrain in her head:

Make the most of Occasion.  
Drink of the brook in the way.

'But the silly old man could not have meant lobsters,' she said as she fell asleep. 'He only speaks of serious things: and lobsters are not serious.'

The next morning Charalampia was not well, and would not leave her tent. Perhaps it was that the sun had been too strong for her the day before, or perhaps her mood had not left her, and made her still more wayward and headstrong. As the day wore on, Sophrosyne tried to show her reason, lamenting that useful time should be wasted. 'August Pupil,' she said, 'you must make the most of Occasion, remembering that it may never present itself again.' 'Yes,' answered Charalampia, 'that is what the Silentiary said—don't keep repeating it like a parrot.' So you see how rude Charalampia could be to her *gouvernante*. It was not till the next day that the cavalcade moved on. Towards nightfall they heard a strange sound, which filled the air and became louder as they went forward. It was as if a multitude of ducks were quacking all at once. Sophrosyne inquired its meaning of the guide. 'It is only the frogs,' he said, 'of Lake Astyanax. The lake is full of frogs, and on a still evening you can hear them two miles off, or more.'

Sophrosyne was relieved and Charalampia was greatly pleased, for it was by the Lake Astyanax that the Holy Hermit Paulus dwelt who knew the only cure for freckles. So she said to the Grand Silentiary: 'Wise and Reverend Father, I have heard much of a Holy Hermit, one Paulus, who has his cell by this lake, and I wish to see him.' The Silentiary was much comforted, seeing in Charalampia's request a desire for better things, and not knowing anything of the cure for freckles. 'August Lady,' he said, 'at daybreak tomorrow, I will myself seek the Holy Hermit and inform him of your request. He will then perhaps allow himself to be seen, though Holy Hermits do not in general converse with women. But for the present keep your soul in patience. Seek repose, and may blessed thoughts attend your slumbers.'

Charalampia did not sleep well—she was fatigued by the journey; and the croaking of the frogs was so loud as to wake her more than once as she dozed.



She was still resting on her cushions when the Silentiary returned from his search after the Holy Hermit. 'Gracious Lady,' he said, 'the Holy Hermit has left this lake, though he returned to his cell for a pair of sandals and only set out again yesterday morning.' 'Ah!' cried Sophrosyne, 'if we had only arrived a few hours sooner we should have found him.' Her words, and still more her looks, were a reproof to Charalampia, whose wayward mood had lost a whole day. Charalampia tried to dispel her thoughts, and the irksome refrain which ran in her head, 'Make the most of Occasion,' by asking the Silentiary, 'Where has the Hermit gone?' 'The Holy Hermit has finished the conversion of the frogs,' he said. 'They used to be a sad heathenish lot who could only repeat a jargon of "Brek-kek-ke-kex-koax-koax," which had come down from pagan times; but Paulus has won them to better things, and now they continually cry "Pax, pax, pax—Peace, peace, peace." It is a pity that he was only a Latin. If he had been Orthodox, he might have taught them to say "Eirene," which is, as you know, the Greek for Peace.'

'They left me little enough peace last night,' said Charalampia, 'and perhaps it is easier for frogs to say Pax than Eirene.'

'The Holy Hermit *could* have taught them anything he wished; but now he is gone to convert the crows which build in the great forest of Kalodendria.'

Charalampia inquired of the Guide where the great forest was, and was pleased to learn that they would pass close to it. A day later they saw immense woods in the distance, and before long they were skirting Kalodendria itself. They camped for the night on the edge of a broad grass track, lighting a fire of fir-cones to keep off any stray wolves. If Charalampia had been troubled by the frogs, she found the crows no less disturbing. They made a great noise at evening when they returned to the trees, and again at morning when they left them. Through the night they seemed to suffer from constant alarms, and then there were long bursts of cawing and beating of wings.

At dawn the Silentiary set out to make inquiries as to where the Holy Hermit lodged, and learned that he dwelt by a well in the wood, not more than a mile from their camp. The Silentiary, Sophrosyne, and Charalampia rode along a forest-path where the shade was very agreeable, and where the yellow leaves of the plane-trees were beginning to fall on a track already covered deep with the red beech-leaves of former years. They found the cell without difficulty. It was formed of a little cave in the smooth face of a

sandstone rock. A thread of water trickled down the rock, and at the base made a pool, which was marvellously clear and still. The Hermit had fixed some fir-boughs in crevices of the rock so as to shade the entrance to his cave. The Silentiary entered with a pious greeting, but found the cell empty. So they sat down outside to await Paulus' return. After a while they heard footsteps approaching, and a woodman came in sight. He asked if he could serve them, and on learning their errand said: 'Alas, Seniors! the Holy Hermit is no longer here. He has converted the crows which infest this wood and changed their empty cry of "Caw, caw, caw," into "Laus, laus, laus," which he explained to me means "Praise" in the Western tongue. You, perhaps, who are only passers-by, notice no change, but to us dwellers in the wood there is a holy restfulness in the birds' cry which was lacking in the past.' Then all the crows together cried 'Laus, laus, laus,' till Charalampia held her hands to her ears. Charalampia was very proud of her ears. They were small and encarnadine, like the transparent pink shells which are found on the fine sand at the top of the Creek of Hephaestio. 'I do not know what their croak means,' said Charalampia, 'but I think it is even more ugly than the quacking of the frogs in Lake Astyanax.' The woodman looked grieved at this thoughtless remark, and the Silentiary ended the pause by asking when the Hermit would return to Kalodendria. 'I cannot tell,' the woodman answered shortly. 'He passed the night before yesterday at Kalodendria, but left in the early morning. He is gone to the Lebanon to convert the Onagers.' He saluted the Silentiary with a simple grace and went on his way.

'I wonder,' said Charalampia, 'if there *is* a Hermit at all. He seems like the Grey Fisherman, and always escapes us. It makes me angry.' 'With whom *ought* you to be angry?' asked the Silentiary. No one said anything more, and they rode on, but every time her horse's hoofs rustled in the red beech-leaves and the dry twigs it seemed to Charalampia that they said: 'Make, make, make.' By degrees a sentence grew out of it: 'Make the most of Occasion. Drink of the brook in the way.'

A day later they entered the Valley of Gargarus. It is a long defile with cliffs on either side where the rock is only partially covered by dwarf and wizened shrubs. The place has an evil name for robbers; and the cavalcade kept closer together. After they had been in the valley for some hours the sides became less steep for a time. There were no longer any shrubs, and the slopes were formed of large and small pebbles and loose broken rocks. 'Of

what a beautiful blue are some of the little pebbles!' said Sophrosyne. 'Shall we not pick up some of them?'

Charalampia looked scornful. 'It is that your eyes are old,' she said. 'To me they seem flowers of blue geranium. We can gather plenty when we come back.' The Silentiary said nothing, and as Sophrosyne herself was anxious to get out of the valley she did not press her request, and they went on.

When evening fell they were very nearly through the valley. The air was full of fireflies, and after a time the travellers seemed clothed in shining armour, for their coats became damp in the ground-mists and the fireflies stuck to them. They all kept silence, in wonder at the strangeness of the scene, till they heard a youth of the escort singing. He had a tunable voice, and the Silentiary knew the words of the evening hymn:

Let all things created praise  
The splendour of their Maker's ways.

'How strangely the pebbles sparkle in the open spaces!' said Sophrosyne. 'Should we not gather some?' 'They are only glow-worms,' laughed Charalampia. 'Is it not too late in the year for glow-worms?' asked the Silentiary. 'If it is not too late for fireflies it is not too late for glow-worms. They must be a late kind of glow-worm,' said Charalampia, and they went forward.

There were no alarms of robbers, and before midnight they reached Panormium. The Silentiary and the soldiers escorted Charalampia and Sophrosyne to the doors of the Convent. Sophrosyne was to remain some days with her pupil and then return to Petraia.

After so long a journey it was a great pleasure to Charalampia to find herself in bed. The fine linen sheets had been woven in the Convent and were scented with dried vervain. As she fell asleep she heard the Nuns still singing in the Church, though it was past one o'clock in the morning.

The Convent of the Panachrantos at Panormium was of the Order of Acemites. They were called Acemites or sleepless ones, because the service in their Church never ceased. There were 243 Nuns, including the Abbess, and there might never be less than twenty Nuns present in the choir day or night. The Abbess was firm but considerate, and the Nuns were kind to Charalampia. She was a guest of the House, and so not subject to any monastic rule, but she chafed at first at the bonds which even being a guest in a religious house implied. She was only allowed to leave her

room at certain hours and for a certain time. She had been given a cool and airy chamber with a stone-vaulted roof and white-washed walls. In one corner was her bed, covered with a quilt worked in the Convent. The quilt was white and had in the middle a green cross which was the badge of the Order. From her windows Charalampia had a wide view over the uplands in the direction of Petraia, and was more fortunate than the professed Sisters, whose windows had little tin cases outside which prevented their seeing anything except the sky.

Four Sisters taught her respectively Persian, needlework, music, and divinity. Charalampia found the regular hours irksome and took little interest in her lessons, especially in Persian and divinity. After a while the Persian Sister complained to the Abbess. 'It is better, Reverend Mother, that you appoint some one else to teach Charalampia Persian. She is wayward and headstrong. Her thoughts continually wander, and either she talks about other matters or she sits moody and silent.'

Later in the day came the divinity Sister. 'Reverend Mother,' she said, 'it is better that you appoint some one else to teach Charalampia divinity. She is wayward and headstrong. My instruction does not profit her. She shows herself idle; and once while I read to her the "Book of the Genealogies," I found, after half an hour, that she had fallen asleep. At other times she does even worse, speaking lightly of the Holy Hermits and Anchoresses, and smiling indecorously at their wonderful works.'

The Abbess was much perturbed, and spoke seriously with Charalampia, exhorting her to do better for her father's sake. 'I cannot do better here,' said Charalampia, not calling her 'Reverend Mother,' as is necessary. 'I do not like the Convent, and wish to return to Petraia.' The Abbess said: 'Your August Father ordered that you should remain here eleven months and nineteen days; it is therefore not possible for you to return before that time has expired. Is there anything which I can do to make this House more pleasant? Is there anything that you had at Petraia that you miss here?' Charalampia could not answer readily, for in truth she liked the House and the Sisters, and lacked nothing. The fault was that she herself was wayward and headstrong. 'I miss,' said she at last, 'the Avenue of Pepper-trees, and my Bokhara bedquilt worked with pinks and sprays of fuchsia.' The Abbess was displeased. 'I cannot bring you an avenue of pepper-trees,' she said, 'though many consider the Paradise of this House to be as beautiful as the Gardens of Alcinous: and we may not use any

bedquilt other than those bearing the green cross, which is the badge of my Order.' Then by way of punishment she forbade Charalampia to walk in the Paradise for a fortnight; and ordered her to learn by heart the 'Akolythia,' which they sing on St. Venantius' Day, beginning:

Sing Sisters of that Paradise  
Where God the Father walks at eve  
With Saints and beasts in wondrous wise  
Where nothing comes to grieve,

and ending with:

So with all Saints and animals  
Who in that Paradise rejoice  
We shall reply to Him that calls,  
Speak, Lord, Whose creatures hear Thy voice.

Charalampia did not know how beautiful the Paradise was till she could no longer enter it. She might only take exercise now in the Cloister, from which the great Church opened. She walked to and fro in the Cloister every day committing to memory the 'Akolythia,' which they sing on St. Venantius' Day. At first she found it wearisome, for there are twenty-seven verses, and she had never learnt anything before by heart. But she was glad to know the names of those animals to whom it was given to enter Paradise, and before the fortnight was past she had learned the whole 'Akolythia.'

The Abbess was pleased with her. 'You may walk again in the Paradise,' she said; 'and as you have shown yourself diligent, I will allow you once a week to be present at the Night-Office. It shall be at mid-week, for service of Eporthrion, which begins at two o'clock and ends at four. I will charge the Waking-Sister, whom we call the Orthrophoit, to wake you at half-past one every Wednesday morning.'

Charalampia thought it a strange reward that she should have to attend a service at two o'clock in the morning, for early rising was difficult with her; but she said nothing, fearing lest she might be again shut out from the Paradise.

Next Wednesday the Orthrophoit roused her at 1.30 and waited till Charalampia answered the call. But Charalampia did not rise at once, and in a moment dozed again. When she woke the second time it was two o'clock, and the last *codony* of bells were ringing. 'It is too late,' she said, and turning over on her heart-side fell finally asleep. The Abbess came to her room after breakfast.

'I meant it to be a privilege that you should be allowed to attend the Night-Office,' she said, 'but you are wicked enough to regard it as a burden. Therefore you must receive such further punishment as you have made it, and must now attend the Night-Office twice weekly, on Wednesdays and Fridays.' 'How long will that last?' said Charalampia. 'To whom are you speaking?' asked the Abbess. 'To you,' said Charalampia rudely. 'You are speaking to the Superior of this House,' the other said gravely. 'How long is it to last?' repeated Charalampia; but something in the Abbess's look made her add 'Reverend Mother.' Then the Abbess said: 'It must last till the punishment becomes a pleasure,' and left the room. So you see how wayward and headstrong was Charalampia.

At first the Eporthrion Office was not so bad, for the autumn nights were still warm; and sometimes through the open windows Charalampia heard the laugh of the owls as they flew to and fro hunting their prey; and once there was a burst of roystering song when the grape-treaders came back after the finish of the wine-making. The Sisters knelt on the stone floor, but Charalampia was given a little kneeling-mat plaited of scented rushes. Sometimes she did not follow the service as closely as she should, and looked about her. The Church pleased her with its great size, and sometimes she went into it in the afternoon, finding it cool and refreshing when the air was hot outside. It was covered with dark-blue mosaics on which walked rows of pale and thin-faced saints. The men and women were much alike and she could not tell who they were. They reminded her of the regiment of olive-faced Peltasts from Parameria whom she used to watch exercising on the far side of the Palace Square at Petraia.

Towards the end of November the snow began to fall on the uplands, and the great Church was very cold at night, because the Acemites use no braziers in their churches. Charalampia put on a travelling-cape of green and blue velvet with a deep collar of blue fox, which she had brought from Petraia.

The Novices made fun of it.

One morning after service, at the season when lessons are read from 'The Histories,' a Postulant laughed: 'What was Joseph's coat of many colours like?' And another said: 'The King's daughter is all glorious without.' And a third: 'Tamar had a garment of divers colours.'

Charalampia was very angry, and complained to the Abbess. 'Have you never been rude yourself?' said the Superior, 'nor



spoken unkind words? They do wrong who speak thus unkindly, so it is better to remove the occasion. In future do not wear this coat, remembering that it is Providence which orders heat or cold—"He casteth out His ice like morsels." 'Nay,' said Charalampia, 'who is able to abide His frost?'

Yet she did not wear the blue and green coat again, but only doubled her underclothes, of which she had brought a store from Petraia in a cedar box with brass ornaments. It had a lock which struck a bell whenever it was opened.

In December the snow fell heavily, and the wolves came down from the uplands into the plain. More than once at Eporthrion, in the dark mornings, Charalampia heard the distant barking of the wolf-pack, and the sound filled her with terror. On the Feast of St. Barbara a snowstorm began, which lasted for three days till the Cloister was half filled with snow, and there was a drift against the gate of the Paradise, which did not melt for many weeks. The Farm-steward, who every day brought in the milk from the Convent farm, could no longer drive, but carried the milk in barrels slung on either side of the great mule called Bellerophon. One morning the Farm-steward came in with a sad tale of how he had seen the snow trodden down in bloody patches and two feet of a man and one foot of a woman left in their boots by the roadside.

On Radix Jesse Day there was a rumour that the Holy Hermit Paulus was to keep Christmas at Panormium. A day later the Abbess had word that he would lodge at the Guest-house outside the gate, and would confess Sisters on the Vigil. He could not confess all the 243 Sisters, and there was much pious rivalry as to who should share this great privilege. The choice rested with the Abbess. She sent for Charalampia, and said: 'My Child, I have watched you of late closely, and am told by others that you are less wayward and headstrong, therefore I have chosen you as one who may confess to the Holy Hermit. Paulus is a very holy man, and is only now returned from the Lebanon, where he has converted the Onagers. It has been a difficult task, but he believes that all are now converted. He has indeed so great a power over animals that presently I shall ask him to exorcise the cockroaches which over-run the Abbey kitchen. Sister Amygone says it is sometimes difficult to cook on account of them.'

Charalampia thanked the Abbess, and recollecting the Pax and Laus wondered what he had taught the Onagers to say. She was much pleased that she was to confess to Paulus, because she

remembered that it was he who knew the only cure for freckles, and she hoped he would tell it to her.

The Sisters made Confession at the Panachrantos, kneeling on a rug before the Confessor, who sat in the stone seat which the Abbess occupied at Grand Chapter. So Charalampia was able to see exactly what Paulus was like. He had a very long white beard, and wore an air of great sanctity. None could look at him without being sure of his piety and lovingkindness. Charalampia knew as soon as she saw him why it was that animals loved him and the secret of his power over them.

When the Confession was over, and when Paulus had given her Absolution, he said: 'Dear Child, life is very long and very short. I am returning from my pilgrimage, and you are setting out on yours: *Redeuntis profecturis tesseram dent*—Let the soldiers who return to camp give the password to those who are setting out.' The Latin words reminded Charalampia that he was from the Western Empire, for he had spoken Greek so well that she had forgotten whence he came. He went on: 'I shall not see you again. Tell me, Is there any password that I can pass to you, anything that an old man can give beyond his blessing?'

Then Charalampia said quickly: 'Holy Paulus, give me your cure for freckles.' The Holy Hermit was surprised, and Charalampia thought afterwards that he smiled, but it was a very loving smile.

'I thought,' he said, 'that you would have asked something for the spirit rather than for the body; but if you so wish, I will give it to you. Yet reflect that bodily beauty is only to be admired so far as it reflects beauty of spirit. Beside that, you seem as comely and well favoured as is desirable for your sex.'

'Is it a *real* cure?' Charalampia asked. Paulus looked hurt. 'There is no other cure,' he said. 'It will not leave a single freckle; but, remember, that once removed you never can bring them back.'

'It is not likely that I should wish to.'

'Perhaps not,' said the Hermit. 'Yet, if I give you this poor bodily recipe, I will add to it a spiritual. This is the password and *tessera* for you and all the young: "Make the most of Occasion. Drink of the brook in the way, you know not when you may reach the next well."'

Charalampia bit her lips. 'The Abbess has told him to say this,' she thought; but the Abbess had told him nothing. He gave Charalampia his blessing, and the same evening she found in



her chamber a little phial of blown glass with a slip of parchment tied to it, giving instruction for using its contents. She never saw the Hermit again, for shortly after he went back to Rome to help the Emperor Mauricius in the final destruction of the pagan temples. It was while the great statue of Venus-of-the-Mirror was being broken up that the head of the figure fell on his left foot and so injured him that he died.

Before he went, the Abbess had asked him to exorcise the cockroaches, and he did so, reading the 'Feygete' in so stern a voice that they came out of their holes with a downcast expression and marched rustling across the kitchen floor out through the open door into the darkness. There was never another cockroach seen in the Parachrantos till the unspeakable Turks took the house in 1438, and turned the great Church into a mosque. They covered with whitewash all the deep-blue mosaics and the regiment of Holy Peltasts, and the Panagia herself; though the golden wings of the four archangels are still seen supporting the dome, and sometimes, when a patch of whitewash flakes off, a pale and thin-faced Saint looks out.

At Christmas Charalampia received a present from the Prince of Caucasia. It was a hand-mirror with a silver face and a gold back, on which were two birds pecking at a vine-cluster between them.

On Christmas night there was a fire lit in the great Hall, red wine was served from skins, and cakes made in the likeness of the Blessed Babe were eaten. The Nuns gathered in groups, and Charalampia sat at the Abbess's feet. On a table stood a silver-gilt image of the Panagia, holding the Blessed Babe in her arms. Both figures had been much enriched with jewels, but many of the stones had come out of their sockets and were now missing. 'Ah!' said the Abbess, 'if we only had two sapphires to restore the Panagia's eyes!' 'Or a diamond for the Blessed Babe's orb!' said another Nun. 'If only we could visit the Valley of Gargarus!'

Charalampia remembered the name. 'I passed through the Valley of Gargarus,' she said, 'as I journeyed from Petraia to this House.'

The Abbess said: 'I think you must be mistaken, for the Valley of Gargarus is beset by robbers and is never traversed for that reason.'

'I am not mistaken, Reverend Mother,' answered Charalampia; 'but there was less danger for me because we had with us fifty soldiers, and the Grand Silentiary, and the Purveyor, and Sophrosyne.'

'Did you see nothing of the blue sapphires, which are famous through all Asia, or the diamonds?'

'Nay, I saw nothing except some blue geranium flowers growing among the pebbles a little way from the track; and, towards the end of the valley, some glow-worms which twinkled like stars.'

'Could it be that the flowers were sapphires or the glow-worms diamonds?' asked the Abbess.

Charalampia remembered how Sophrosyne had spoken of blue pebbles. 'I do not know,' she said; 'but I shall pass by the same way on my return to Petraia, and if it should indeed be as you say, I will gather two sapphires for the eyes of the Panagia, and a fine diamond for the orb of the Blessed Babe.' Her voice faltered, and she leaned against the Abbess's chair till it creaked and creaked again. To her each creak sounded like the 'Make, make,' which she had heard before from the red beech-leaves and dry twigs of Kalodendria:

'Make use of Occasion. Drink of the brook in the way.'

Charalampia used the Holy Hermit's remedy for freckles every morning. After a time she perceived a change, and just as the phial was emptied all the freckles and sunburn had disappeared. Her skin had become clear and pink like the skin of a very young child.

At first she was much pleased with the change, and never tired of looking at herself in the mirror which the Prince of Caucasia had sent her; but before long she thought that she had been more comely when she was sunburnt. From this you may see that Charalampia was vain, and thought too much of her own looks. She tried to get brown again by sitting in the sun when she visited the Paradise, and by walking in the wind; but in spite of all she could do, her skin remained clear and pink like the skin of a very young child. The Novices spoke half in jest and half in praise: 'What a rose of Sharon!' or 'Her countenance is as a full moon in summer!' One day the Abbess said: 'Child, I am better pleased. Your teachers speak well of you and report that you try to restrain yourself and are no longer so wayward and headstrong. This change is happily reflected in the purity of your countenance.' Charalampia, alas! accepted this praise and said nothing of the cure for freckles.

At Easter the Abbess gave her a purple egg with the Lord's Prayer written on it in gold. Purple eggs are given only to those who have conducted themselves extremely well. The others have

their choice of blue or green or red eggs marked with the crescent for Byzantium, or a star for Bethlehem, or an eagle for St. John of Studium.

All this time Charalampia had gone twice a week to the Office of Eporthrion at two in the morning. By degrees the early rising ceased to be irksome to her, and, as the days lengthened, she took pleasure in watching the pale and thin-faced Saints grow clearer in the dawn as the Nuns sang :

Eternal Maker of the Light  
Brighter Thyself than all things bright.

One day, towards the end of April, the Abbess sent for her. 'Child,' she said, 'your punishment has become your pleasure ; you are therefore released from attending the Night-Office.' 'Nay, Reverend Mother,' said Charalampia, 'is there any reason why I should be deprived of benefit because it has become a pleasure ?' 'Of that I am judge,' the Abbess answered with some sadness, 'and I think it better you should no longer go to the Night-Office.' Charalampia bowed her head and said no more, for she had grown less wayward and headstrong.

So she went no more to Eporthrion, though habit often woke her at the usual hour. From her chamber she could still hear the Nuns singing in the great Church and frequently knew the words of the hymns. On May 18, which is St. Venantius' Day, she dressed herself by two o'clock in the morning and sat on a footstool at the window, so that she might hear the Akolythia sung which the Abbess had once set her for a task.

Sing Sisters of that Paradise  
Where God the Father walks at eve  
With Saints and beasts in wondrous wise  
Where nothing comes to grieve.

The early morning was cool ; but though the sun was only just risen the scent of the climbing helichryse and orange blossom filled the air. The Nuns sang very sweetly, and when the last verse ended :

So with the Saints and animals  
Who in that Paradise rejoice,  
Grant us to answer Him that calls,  
Speak, Lord, whose creatures hear Thy voice,

Charalampia grieved that she was not in the choir, and seemed to herself to be an exile. Later in the day she felt so sad that she

asked to see the Abbess and knelt before her. 'Reverend Mother,' she said, 'make me one of the Acemites, take me for a Nun in the Panachrantos.' The Abbess put her hands on her head, and smiled very kindly. 'What!' she said, 'and be no more a Princess?—and this hair?' She took one of the heavy plaits in her fingers, and Charalampia knew what she meant, for all Acemites must keep their heads shorn. Now Charalampia was proud of her hair, which, as has been said, was in colour as if one had beaten gold and copper together. She had been able to sit on it since she was twelve years old. After a pause she rose from her knees, and said: 'Reverend Mother, perhaps this path is too hard for me.' The Abbess gave her the 'Part-in-Peace,' and so Charalampia's desire to join the Acemites was for the time lulled to sleep.

After eleven months and nineteen days had passed, an escort appeared to take Charalampia back to Petraia. The Grand Silentiary was there, and Sophrosyne, and the Purveyor, and a captain with fifty soldiers. Sophrosyne passed the night in a vestibule next to Charalampia's chamber. Charalampia had obtained leave from the Abbess to attend Eporthrion for the last time, and after the service the Abbess sent for her. 'My child,' she said, 'we all sorrow to lose you. Pray constantly to the Panachrantos that she may watch over you and prosper us as you have been prospered in these last months.' Many of the Sisters came to say good-bye, and some wept. The divinity Sister and the music Sister and the needlework Sister were there, and the Persian Sister bade her farewell in Persian, for Charalampia had made great progress in that tongue and could speak with ease and correctness.

When Charalampia was at last mounted on her mule, she also wept. She reached down to touch the Abbess's hand. 'Reverend Mother,' she cried, 'I will never forget you, nor this place, and as I go through the Valley of Gargarus, I will choose out two sapphires for the eyes of the Panagia and a fine diamond for the orb of the Blessed Babe.' 'Nay,' said the Silentiary, 'for the Abarites have risen, and hold all the Valley of Gargarus. It is said that they have there found stones of great price, and put many people to death. We cannot pass again by that way, but must return by Meroea.'

The last remembrance that Charalampia had of the House of the Acemites, was the sound of the sweet singing of the Nuns, as the cavalcade passed at the back of the great Church. It was

the same sound as had welcomed her when she first came to the Panachrantos.

The journey seemed short because Charalampia pressed forward and made no unnecessary halts. Though she grieved to leave the House of the Acemites, she was glad to find herself in her old chamber which looked over the Palace Square. Her father greeted her with kindness but gravity, and said that he had news that on the expiry of the full year the Prince of Caucasia would renew his suit. He might therefore be expected very shortly.

Within a few days Charalampia was summoned to the Hall of the Thousand Lamps where her father and the Prince awaited her. The Prince saluted her with dignity, asking in the Persian tongue after her health. It seemed that something of her old wayward mood came back to Charalampia after she left the sweet influences of the Acemites, for though she was now a good Persian scholar she made as if she did not understand what the Prince said. The Prince seemed sad, and more than once tried to open a conversation in Persian, but always without success; Charalampia would only speak Greek. All the while she longed to put aside her waywardness and do as the Prince wished, but some bad influence constrained her and tied her tongue. The Prince's visit lasted ten days. There were excursions arranged on land and water, and hunting in the woods and hawking on the uplands. Charalampia and the Prince were much thrown together and seemed to enjoy each other's society. So the time passed till the tenth day came, and the Prince left with his retinue on the eleventh day, before daybreak. He had spoken with the Duke after supper the night before. 'I dare not ask Charalampia to marry me,' he said, 'she cannot speak Persian, and shows little liking for me. Sometimes I am in doubt whether she is indeed the Charalampia whom I knew. The other was sunburnt and freckled, but this one has a pink skin like that of a very young child. I must not longer stay, for my Most Noble Father is sorely ill and expects my return.'

On the evening before he left, Sophrosyne had given him a packet from her pupil. It was the mirror of silver and gold with the two birds pecking at the vine-clusters, which he had sent her at Christmas. When he was gone the evil mood seemed to leave Charalampia. She did not say, as once before: 'Let him go and a good riddance,' but shut herself into her chamber and wept bitterly. She did not see her father, nor indeed did he make any attempt to visit her. She would not walk in her garden, and did not answer when anyone spoke to her. One morning, nearly three weeks later,

Sophrosyne found her sitting on the bed with her hair let down and a large pair of scissors beside her. The *gouvernante* was alarmed, thinking that her pupil was minded to do herself a mischief; and took up the scissors. 'Have no fear,' said Charalampia, 'it is only that I am going to cut off my hair. I am so unhappy that I shall go back to the Panachrantos and become an Acemite—I have lost the great Occasion of life.' She broke into tears and lamentation, and refused to be comforted. But Sophrosyne would not give back the scissors, and at length persuaded her not to cut off her hair till she had made sure that she could be received by the Acemites. A few days later Charalampia found that a messenger was going to the House of the Panachrantos, and charged him with a letter to the Abbess in which she asked if she could be received as an Acemite.

So the days and nights passed sadly, for Charalampia slept little. One night, after Sophrosyne had retired, Charalampia sat at the open window watching the stars. The scent of climbing-helichryse below the window reminded her of the Paradise of the House of the Panachrantos. Then she heard the clatter of horse-hoofs in the stone-paved lane, which mounts from the town to the Palace Square, and, soon after, she was aware that a large cavalcade with out-riders and lanthorns was entering by the War Office gate. She watched them cross at the lower end of the Square until they were lost in the Palace precincts.

She began to comb her hair, which looked like gold and copper beaten together, before going to bed. Everything was very still except for a cricket behind the wainscot—which made a noise, 'Mek, mek, mek.'

The watchmen in the Square were striking their iron-shod staves on the pavement, and calling midnight, when some one knocked at Charalampia's door. It was Sophrosyne, who entered and said: 'August Pupil, your Most Noble Father desires your presence in the Hall of the Thousand Lamps as soon as may be.' Charalampia said: 'Do you know why he wants me? Tell him I cannot come at this hour of the night. I will speak with him to-morrow.'

The cricket behind the wainscot made a noise—'Mek, mek, mek.'

'Another suitor has come to seek your hand.'

'What!—a suitor at midnight! I have lost the only suitor to whom I could give my hand,' mourned Charalampia. 'If this one seeks me, he can wait till morning for me to refuse him.'

'He says he has ridden day and night to see you, and cannot brook delay.'

The cricket behind the wainscot said : ' Make, make, make,' and Charalampia remembered how the horse-hoofs rustled in the red beech-leaves and dry twigs of Kalodendria. ' Yes,' she said, ' it is better to get it over. In half an hour's time I will be there.'

When Charalampia entered the Hall with her attendants, the place seemed set for a great spectacle. There were countless lights, and at the far end a crowd of men in splendid robes. She wore a white dress of soft Smyrna silk, and a cloak of silk gauze with a clasp of golden eagles. The plaits of her hair gleamed like gold and copper beaten together, and she moved with dignity and grace.

As the doors were flung open for her, a man stepped out from the crowd and came hastily to meet her.

' It is the Prince of Caucasia,' she said to Sophrosyne.

' No, it is some one else,' answered the *gouvernante*.

He was beside her, and dropped on one knee making a profound obeisance, and kissing her hand. ' Charalampia,' he said, ' I have returned because I could not remain absent. My father, of blessed memory, is dead. I am king of Caucasia, and am come to ask you to be my Queen. I beg you to forgive anything that I have said amiss—I do not ask you to learn Persian, and I think you still more beautiful now—if that is possible—than when you were sunburnt.'

Charalampia raised him from his knee and asked him, speaking Persian in the soft dialect of Yr-am-Esor, to lead her to the Duke. She said something more, which those who stood by did not catch, and put her arm in his. He kissed her on both temples, as is the fashion in affiances, and placed a cabochon sapphire ring on her first finger.

Charalampia was happy on the occasion of her marriage and in the birth of a child. She was married on December 9—the day after the Feast of the Panachrantos; and a son was born to her on September 8—the Nativity of the Panagia. She called his name Charalampius and he became the founder of the Charalampiad Dynasty which united the Duchy of Petraia with the Kingdom of Caucasia for 700 years. His gold coins are famous for their beauty, and bear the words : ' Make use of Occasion.' But the great dekadrachm, which is a very rare coin indeed, is inscribed : ' He shall drink of the brook in the way.'

JOHN MEADE FALKNER.



## WITH THE ANZACS IN LONDON.

BY SIR SIDNEY LEE.

### I.

LAST July the Anzac department of the Y.M.C.A. created a corps of guides in the interest of the thousands of Australians and New Zealanders—non-commissioned officers and privates—who are wont to stay on short leave at the Y.M.C.A. soldiers' clubs or 'huts' scattered over the west and centre of London. I accepted an invitation to join the corps for a time, and almost every day during three weeks of my early autumn vacation I attended in a piloting capacity either at the Central Y.M.C.A. Building in Tottenham Court Road or at the 'hut' in Grosvenor Gardens or at the new Shakespeare 'hut' in Gower Street. Parties of men numbering from half a dozen to twenty-five were placed in my charge, and I conducted them on morning or afternoon tours through the City or Westminster or even farther afield. The Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, the National Gallery, the Royal United Service Institution, Middle Temple Hall, the Temple Church, the Law Courts, St. Paul's Cathedral, the Guildhall, the Tower of London, and Hampton Court Palace all came many times within my line of route. Westminster Cathedral, the Natural History Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Charterhouse were rarer objectives. The guide was the only civilian who was allowed to join the parties, and the scheme provided that each man should defray his own expenses. These rarely went beyond the fares of train or omnibus, for men in uniform were as a rule excused the normal admission fees to public buildings.

The majority of my protégés were Australians, but some New Zealanders, Canadians, and South Africans, and a few British sailors as well as soldiers frequently joined us. One day my companions included an Englishman of mature years, who had emigrated to Chile as a child with his parents, and at the outbreak of war had hurried home from a horse ranch near Montevideo to enlist in a Lancashire regiment. My Australian charges chiefly belonged to battalions or reinforcements newly arrived in England. Their first taste of the firing line was yet to come. They had just begun a final training in camps of the English countryside.

My conducted parties were usually leavened by a few overseas soldiers who had served and been wounded in Gallipoli, Egypt, or France. Such men were spending in London a fortnight's furlough after discharge from a convalescent hospital and before the announcement of the medical board's decision as to their service in the immediate future. But as a rule, the men in my charge reached London a few days after disembarking at Plymouth or Devonport from the crowded transports in which seven weeks had been spent on a tedious voyage from Melbourne or Sydney round the Cape. A smaller crowd had broken the journey between this country and Australia with a preliminary training of several months' duration on the Egyptian desert near the Suez canal, at Tel-el-Kebir or Ismailia. The Australians' 'disembarkation leave' was limited to four days. Each week two contingents arrived in London from the country camp on this adventurous errand, one staying from Friday morning till Monday night and the other from Monday morning till Thursday night. The Canadians' 'disembarkation' furlough usually lasted two days longer.

There was no opportunity of grouping according to education or predilections those who invited my guidance each morning. I accepted all as they came—clerks, schoolmasters, shop-assistants, mechanics of many kinds, farm hands, miners, and 'larrikins.' Several Canadians who joined me were born and brought up on English or Scottish soil. They had become colonists by their own adult choice and were not altogether ignorant of London. Nearly all my Australian companions were on the other hand colonial born and bred, and were complete strangers to our city. They had rarely formed clear conceptions of its distinguishing features. They were as a rule grandsons of early settlers; their parents and kinsfolk had never visited the old country and had often lost all personal touch with it. Differences in temperament, training, experience and intellectual aptitude led to wide variations in the impressions produced by our explorations. I here set down a few scattered notes of my three weeks' work. My opportunities of intercourse were too limited to justify me in any generalisation regarding the cultivation or intelligence of any of our Dominions as a whole. But I may fairly preface these observations with a tribute to the cheery spirit of good comradeship which marked all the men's relations with myself.

## II.

It will cause Londoners no surprise to learn that Hampton Court Palace furnished the most exhilarating and, in some ways, the most illuminating of my experiences as guide. Many of the scenes which there first met the visitors' eyes were already more or less familiar in picture or photograph, and the first sight of the solid reality excited the sort of joyous thrill which comes of seeing a familiar image suddenly take life. Each new vista of Hampton Court proved more cheering than the last. Every word of explanation was listened to with close attention, and occasionally notes were made of the spoken words. Some of the company had previously reproached London with a lack of 'scenery.' Now they revelled in the beauty of landscape and river. The varied green tints proved strangely welcome to men whose eyes had been accustomed to long stretches of brown and yellow pasturage. At every turn some unexpected novelty kept their sense of wonder alive. Very few members of one party—straight from Victoria—had seen a river lock, and they watched with infinite curiosity the opening and closing of the lock gates of Molesey beside Hampton Court Bridge. It was less surprising that they should find boisterous amusement in the maze in the Palace grounds. On one visit an Australian sergeant, who was helping me to keep together the party, which reached the large total of twenty-six, deemed it out of keeping with his dignity to join the men in threading the labyrinth and remained with me outside. But the self-respecting sergeant loved a jest, and while the men were noisily struggling with the maze's intricacies he suddenly blew his whistle—a signal for them to form line. At the familiar sound there was a wild and impetuous rush through the dense hedges. A second blast of the whistle happily averted any irreparable damage.

It was always in high spirits that we parted with Hampton Court. On two of our visits there Viscountess Wolesey, widow of Field-Marshal Viscount Wolesey, most hospitably acted as cicerone and entertained the men to tea at her house in the Palace. Lady Wolesey's farewell gift of a photogravure portrait of the late Field-Marshal was immensely prized. It was very characteristic that there should be a general desire to despatch the souvenir to Australia by post without delay. One man suggested that it would be wise to *register* so valuable a trophy, but his companions deprecated

that precaution, on the ingenuous ground that registration would call the postman's special attention to the value of the package, and tempt him to purloin it. Unfortunately, my companions shared all soldiers' familiarity with the habit of 'pinching,' which seems ineradicable among unsifted crowds of men.

I usually sought to prolong the pleasure which Hampton Court furnished by making the first stage of the return journey through Richmond. Richmond Hill and Richmond Park well rounded off the glories of the day. The view from Richmond Hill always spelt enchantment to which the neighbouring Richmond Park lent an added rapture. I heard one Anzac soldier, when he caught a glimpse of the Scottish camp in the Park, shout with radiant eyes, 'No more Australia for me; let me join an English regiment!' He envied the Scots their life in such a paradise.

A naval officer, on learning how I was spending my vacation, wrote to me from the North Sea:

'It struck me that it would not be a bad idea if all troops were taken to see some such places as Hampton Court the day before they left England for the front. It might even give a final touch of inspiration to their going, and add a pound or two of weight to their bayonet work.'

My experiences of the Hampton Court excursion, with its Richmond supplement, lent graphic point to the naval officer's words.

The Houses of Parliament likewise stand very high among London's attractions for the overseas soldier. He may know little about our politics or politicians, but he is usually anxious to see the Commons in session, and to get a first-hand glimpse, at the source, of forms and ceremonies which have won a worldwide currency. An invitation from a Member of Parliament to take tea on the Terrace was always accepted with alacrity, and evoked glowing expressions of gratitude.

### III.

It was not, however, in all cases that proffers of hospitable entertainment elicited any very articulate warmth. The Australian cherishes a scant respect for persons and is innocent of all the conventional hypocrisies of compliment. He is unmoved by official or social rank, and declines to interest himself in hereditary

pretension. The House of Lords, despite its brilliant ante-chambers and red upholstery, suggested to many the defect of obsolescence. The offer of private hospitality in their own houses by men and women of wealth and high station rarely made much appeal to a miscellaneous assembly of furlough-men. A gracious invitation to Buckingham Palace to inspect the Royal Stables was once abruptly rejected on the plea of familiarity with a superior breed of horses 'at home.' One could never be certain how an offer of hospitality, whatever its attraction in normal social conditions, would be received by a chance overseas group, and there was no guarantee if an engagement of the kind were made that it would be kept. On the way to the rendezvous, a plighted guest might fall in with a comrade who would successfully urge a change of programme, although nothing more distracting than a lounge at the next street-corner would be substituted. A strong sense of independence, coupled with a certain shyness, and ignorance of social habit, explains much apparent callousness.

There was no lack of curiosity about a few prominent persons whose social advances the men were quite capable of rebuffing. Eagerness to set eyes on the King from a respectful distance was universal. A first glimpse of Buckingham Palace invariably elicited an inquiry as to when the King would come out, and there was a general wish to wait for his appearance. At St. Paul's Cathedral I was often asked where the King sat on Sundays, and when I remarked that the Cathedral was not the customary place of Royal worship, I was invited to account for the seeming anomaly. One Victorian sheep-farmer, whom I met immediately on his arrival, declared that he was off to Windsor by water to glance at the castle, which in his topographical innocence he imagined could be reached in a few minutes by way of the river Thames. The residences in Downing Street of the Prime Minister and Mr. Lloyd George always roused profound interest, though their modest appearance and dimensions provoked only scornful criticism.

The men's thoughts easily turned homewards. The new scenes were often valued less for their historic association or intrinsic importance than for their suggestion of something familiar in their native country. The mention of a British statesman was usually capped by a reference to an Australian one, usually to Mr. Hughes, the Commonwealth Premier, or to Mr. Andrew Fisher or to Sir George Reid. Very frequent were the avowals of pride in the enthusiastic welcome which had been accorded Mr. Hughes on his

visit to Great Britain. One morning my companions caught sight of Mr. Hughes's portrait crudely drawn on the pavement of the Thames Embankment, and with characteristic lavishness they showered coins into the hat of the fortunate artist.

The habit of comparing the unfamiliar with the familiar occasioned some unexpected comments. Men from Sydney looked on Hyde Park with a friendly eye, because, as they pointed out, an open space in their own city bore the like name. Holman Hunt's picture of 'The Light of the World,' in St. Paul's Cathedral, was always greeted with a marked display of warmth, on the ground that the canvas had been seen already in the course of its recent tour on exhibition through the great cities of the Empire. The crooked, narrow streets of London were not regarded with favour; they were held to contrast to their disadvantage with the broad and regular thoroughfares of Melbourne.

#### IV.

It was clear that much of our political history, whether ancient or modern, was a dark mystery. A violent exploit of a suffragette was mentioned as we passed through Westminster Hall. All the men knew something of the suffragettes' recent activities, but one made it a boast that the Commonwealth of Australia was free of such unquiet spirits. I pointed out that women's suffrage was accepted by the Australian Constitution, and that therefore suffragettes could hardly be expected to disturb the peace of the Antipodes. The man was hardly convinced even when a comrade came to my aid with a sound definition of the militant women's aim.

One morning I pointed out in Westminster Hall the brass plate which commemorates the spot on which Charles I. stood to receive sentence of death at his trial. A little later I led the men up Whitehall and called their attention to the Banqueting House (now the Royal United Service Institution) from the middle window of which the king had stepped on to the scaffold set up in the roadway beneath. It was rather disconcerting to be interrupted in a brief description *in situ* of Charles I.'s execution by the perfectly well intentioned query, 'What was he beheaded for?' I had rashly presumed a knowledge of the answer to that question.

The monuments in Westminster Abbey tested historical know-

ledge somewhat severely. To many, the names of the great men whose statues and grave-stones are to be found there conveyed little. Their eminence was taken for granted, but the grounds of their fame were yet to be learned. The splendid bronze recumbent figure of the late Lord Salisbury evoked no sign of recognition. When I expressed surprise at the unfamiliarity of his name, my companions, whose ages ranged from twenty to forty-five, suggested with one accord that the great man must have lived too long ago for his reputation to have reached them. On the other hand, the neighbouring bust of Joseph Chamberlain elicited cries of delighted recognition. They knew Lord Beaconsfield as 'the man who gave us the Suez Canal.' They dubbed Darwin 'the inventor of a new religion.' Shakespeare, Burns, and Dickens excited rather more satisfying remark. Shakespeare, on occasion, was declared to be 'dry,' but almost every one spoke tenderly of 'Bobbie' Burns and of Dickens. At the same time gaps were noted in the Abbey's roll of honour. It was deemed unfortunate that Queen Victoria, King Edward VII., and General Booth should be buried elsewhere, and that Shakespeare should only be represented by a carved effigy and Burns by a bust. Few could state off-hand where each of these illustrious personages was actually interred, and until I had made special inquiry, I was myself at a loss to locate the grave of General Booth. In an oblivious moment, too, a questioner would ask me to account for the failure to give national burial to Lord Kitchener. The untrained mind is so sieve-like that it would seem imperative to erect without delay a fittingly conspicuous national monument to our organiser of victory. With a view to waking sleeping memories I often led my flock, in the absence for the moment of any other memorial, to the show-case in the Royal United Service Institution where Lord Kitchener's baton of Field-Marshal is on view. That baton alone survives of Lord Kitchener's many badges of honour. The rest were on board H.M.S. *Hampshire* when she was tragically wrecked off the Shetlands. In one instance I fear the commemoration of our heroes was thought to be overdone. One artisan fresh from Sydney, after seeing in the course of his first morning in London the Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square, the Nelson relics at the Royal United Service Institution, and the Nelson Sarcophagus in the Crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, cheerily protested when he reached the Nelson Memorial in the Guildhall that the habit of putting up monuments to the great sailor had become a 'mania.'



Even when admiration was unstinted, it was sometimes capriciously bestowed. The gilt frames of the pictures in the National Gallery would attract more attention than the painted canvases. In Westminster Abbey none of the sculptured tombs which were exposed to view evoked quite so lively a solicitude as the piled sandbags beneath which the more elaborate monuments lay concealed. One felt that sandbags were old and familiar friends, and that the monuments were cold and unfamiliar strangers. Few specimens of artillery in the great armoury of the Tower of London offered so many points of attraction as the gun-carriage which recently bore the coffin of the late King Edward VII. in his funeral procession through the streets of London. It was natural, too, at the Tower armoury that the saucer-like steel helmets such as are now worn in the firing-line should be more closely scanned than the finely chased armoured headpieces of earlier epochs. With greater justice, the colours of the Canadian regiments now at the front, which temporarily decorate the monument to General Wolfe in Westminster Abbey, made a profounder impression than the monument itself or the exploits which it commemorates.

It was not always indeed the historical scenes and buildings of London about which the visitors were chiefly curious. Many identified the Capital City of the Empire with objects of less dignity, like Madame Tussaud's Wax-Works or the 'Old Curiosity Shop.' Petticoat Lane often seemed to raise higher expectations than any other street. Others were eager above all things to see a London fog. I had not the opportunity of satisfying that craving, but I did discreetly what I could to vary the tourists' fare.

I was fully alive to the perils of archaeological monotony and always welcomed a possible corrective. When historical memorials plainly palled, I had recourse to a moving stairway or a lift on a tube railway, both of which invariably proved cheering surprises. One day I took my men to the New Bailey, which was as new to me as to them. I had been told that the decoration of the main vestibule was attractive. I did not know at the time that the Central Criminal Court was in session. The party on learning the fact expressed a lively desire to witness a criminal trial. An amiable superintendent of police to whom I confided the wish willingly undertook to gratify it. Several Courts were sitting and we were offered choice of diet; I deprecated anything too harrowing or heinous and selected a case of robbery with violence. The affair erred to my thinking on the side of tameness, but the unaccustomed environ-

ment combined with the quaint complexity in which judge, counsel, and witnesses managed to clothe a very simple issue signally gratified and amused my companions. It was indeed with difficulty that I drew them away.

That morning was exceptionally well filled. From the criminal court we passed to the Old St. Bartholomew's Church and thence, through Smithfield, to the Charterhouse. The interest continued brisk through all its alternations. The sandbags which protected the chief monuments in the ancient church again received a rather closer attention than the structure itself. But there was no lack of admiration for the architectural features of the edifice. The Charterhouse was thoroughly explored under the joint direction of Mrs. Gerald Davies, wife of the Master, and of the librarian, Brother Bridger. None had heard of the institution before, and allusions to Thackeray and Colonel Newcome made no appeal. But the picturesqueness of the chief buildings, the beneficent purpose of the foundation, and domestic details of the brethren's régime stirred a sincere enthusiasm. One felt the telling contrast between the peacefulness of this historic sanctuary and the outside turmoil in which my companions were playing their manful part.

## V.

Chance willed it that West Australian miners and agriculturists, with a sprinkling of 'larrikins' from Victoria or New South Wales, were often more numerous among my clients than men of other occupation or domicile. To all these men Great Britain was previously known in the dimmest of mirages, and it was not always easy to appreciate their angle of vision. Many bucolic Australians, who were born and bred up to the date of their enlistment on the boundless 'stations' of the continent, had broken their journey to England by several months' sojourn in the training camps of Egypt. These men often found it difficult to co-ordinate their rather blurred impressions of Egypt with those which London gave them. They had lately seen the Sphinx and the Pyramids. Cairo, through which they had hurried, was the first large city with which they had made acquaintance. London was the second, and they embarrassingly measured the interest of its sights with those of Cairo, their only available standard. I felt at some disadvantage when a protégé, whose attention I had called to the antiquity and architecture of Westminster Abbey, suddenly without any apparent

relevance asked me whether I reckoned the Abbey quite as memorable as the Pyramids. Similarly, another Australian, on passing from the Abbey into the street, earnestly requested me to take the party next to the mosques. Mosques formed the main object of interest in Cairo, and every city was assumed to furnish like attractions. The sculptured monuments and inscribed grave-stones of the Abbey deprived the building, in the rustic mind, of the customary associations of religious worship, and when I mentioned the Abbey's religious purpose I was often asked by my Egypt-travelled 'larrikins' with what sort of religion the place was identified. There was no irony in these comments, though they seemed to echo Mark Twain's observations to his guide in 'The Innocents Abroad.' A man of the same class who joined my party on a tour through Westminster streets, grinned pleasantly all the while, but only ventured on one remark in the course of the walk. A foot-sentry of the Horse Guards on the parade ground of St. James's Park caught his especial attention, and he broke silence for the only time with the words 'That's a classy kind of bloke.' Cognate inquiries,— 'What's this 'ere river called?' or 'What did you say this place is known as?'— would at times enliven an allocution of mine while on the Thames Embankment, or in some edifice so familiar as the Abbey or St. Paul's.

## VI.

There was little trace of bitterness in the men's general reference to the Germans. Those who had yet to meet them in the field rarely spoke of them, or, if their attention turned that way, contented themselves with a contemptuous remark about the Kaiser. A visit to Whitehall or the Tower of London usually suggested his appropriate doom on a scaffold or in a dungeon. Had the choice been put to the vote, the fate of Charles I. would have carried the day. Men who had faced the firing-line, and had been wounded, had more to say of the foe, but they were inclined to crack a jest at his expense rather than to use strong language. Some Australians talked lightly of a notice board which had been set up over against them not long ago in the German lines, and was inscribed with a repulsive threat to paint a certain parapet with Australian blood. 'I like to hear them squeal,' laughed a young warrior who had been severely wounded while impetuously rushing the third line of the German trenches at Pozières. The speaker laid emphatic

stress on the word 'squeal,' which represented precisely, he assured me, the sound that reached his ears. Another fighter valued above all other fascinations in his experience the sight of a series of the enemy's observation balloons falling in flames behind the German lines after being hit by darts from our aeroplanes.

Of the Turks I heard nothing but praise. They were 'clean fighters' who showed kindness to our wounded. A Turkish prisoner told one of my informants that he could not understand why he should be fighting against the English, and sought a solution of the puzzle in the delusion that the Anzacs, with whom alone he himself had been in conflict, were some different race.

The great issues of the war only came indirectly or allusively under our notice. I somehow formed the opinion that few of the men were greatly interested in the precise causes of the conflict. The conscious motives of enlistment varied. Some of the inducements avowedly touched personal or private more nearly than Imperial or public considerations. The outbreak of war synchronised with a depression in the agricultural industry of the Commonwealth. Unemployment, or a diminished wage, helped to swell the early levies. The recruiting appeal was clearly fostered, too, by the restlessness which impels labouring men of the Dominions to seek periodic change of occupation. Some virtue lay, too, in the natural love of a 'scrap.' One man would explain how he joined because of a chum's example; another would point to the accident of hearing a seasonable public speech or of reading a newspaper article. No merit for their action was claimed, although some mild regret might be expressed for the failure of friends to respond to the call. I heard a few complaints of the discomforts of the ocean voyage and of the rigours of military discipline. But the men's predominant feelings were a genuine enthusiasm for their new calling, and an unflinching resolution to see the struggle through to victory. If they spoke of the grave risks which they were running, their tone was one of cheerful complacency; they were taking their chances hopefully and without over-much concern. The prospect of long exile from their native land was the cause of occasional depression, but the mood did not last long.

The men from Gallipoli whom I met spoke resignedly of their hardships and sufferings there, and their reminiscences abounded in exhilarating episode. One who described with graphic simplicity and pathos the heroic capture of the heights of Suvla Bay, and the unhappy accident which turned a promise of triumph into defeat,

wound up his recital with the cry, 'I wouldn't have missed it for the world!' There is grief over loss of friends, but bereavements are borne with stoical calm. An Australian, who was convalescing after a very serious wound, inquired in my presence of a member of his company—the first he had met since his disablement—as to the fate of their comrades in recent engagements. The wounded man heard in silence and with eager interest the recital of the roll—how this one had been killed, that one had been wounded, and a third had come through unhurt. When Dicky B., a very intimate associate, was named among the slain, the questioner made his one quite audible comment on the catalogue: 'Then Dicky,' he said reflectively, 'won't play cards any more.' The epitaph, which obviously embodied some confidential memory, bore quaint testimony to the general spirit of resignation in which bereavement is faced.

One cannot deduce very much from the *obiter dicta* of the average Anzac when he seeks to put into words the immediate impulse which brings him to the support of the Mother Country. There is clearly present a larger sentiment or intuition than is discoverable in any of the concrete facts which the men ordinarily specify. The strength of the lineal tie, whether it be mentioned or no, lies at the root of the whole matter. 'If England's got to fight, it's up to me,' is a crude expression which figured in a poem published at Sydney in aid of the recruiting movement, and the rough words give the key to the situation. No one, moreover, can be long in the society of the Australian contingents without perceiving that an insistent passion for liberty surges in their blood. It is not a passion which it is always easy to reconcile with the requirements of military discipline or with the comparatively unimportant calls of social convention, but it is an untamable sentiment which reinforces the effective sense of imperial unity and increases the fighting energy of the firing line. The colonial creed reckons the love of liberty as the rallying instinct of the English breed. The men are swayed in this stern struggle, on which they have voluntarily embarked, by the intuitive and instinctive conviction that they are fighting their race's battle for freedom against the cause of tyranny and oppression.

# THE CHILDREN OF EGYPT.

BY ARTHUR E. P. WEIGALL.

'Now remember,' said a sunburnt British sergeant to a new arrival in Egypt, 'in dealing with these 'ere natives—severity always; justice when possible.' The British officer or civilian, however, is seldom inclined to be severe with the native villagers, soldiers, and workmen with whom he comes in contact; for, after a short residence on the banks of the Nile, it becomes clear to him that he has to deal with a pack of good-natured youths who merit severe treatment not more frequently than do our English schoolboys, and who, like them, are most amenable to a line of conduct which is kindly, consistent, and strongly maintained.

The Egyptian peasant seems to have failed to grow up. It is as though he were a relic of the days when the world was young, preserved to this present age together with the Sphinx and the Pyramids. The mind of the lower-class Egyptian has not expanded since the time of the Pharaohs, and when one looks at the modern inhabitants of the country one sees in them the people of five thousand years ago, the tenants of the world's youth. Thus it comes about that the British official in Egypt has to teach as well as take up his share of the burden of government. He has to act as tutor to a most engaging, though sometimes provoking, rabble of children.

How can you be severe with a native who sends you a beautiful letter, written in purple ink, upon pink paper, addressed to 'Sir Excellency Mister Chief Inspector'; and beginning, 'Honoured Enormity'; or how can one apply the booted toe to the petitioner who commences his appeal with the words, 'Sire, prithee goggle not at my beseech'? I have from time to time collected some of these letters received from natives, and in reading them over it is impossible to overcome the feeling that one has inadvertently slipped through a rent in the veil of Time and become a denizen of the land of childhood. To make my meaning clear, I will here quote some of these documents; and the reader will thus understand how difficult it is to regard the writers as responsible men of our sober twentieth century.

Little children, before they are taught their manners, are wont

to tell tales against one another to their mothers or nurses ; and the English official in Egypt is continuously besieged by complaints of this kind, most of which are quite unable to be substantiated. Here, for example, is a typical specimen :

‘ Mohammed Aly, the watchman of the Rest-house, states that while he was watching his spot the Head Watchman came and asked him to go and buy two pigeons. Having the watchman went, the Head Watchman entered the house and began to drink kind of intoxications. On his return found him drinking. He annoyed and became too angry. He said it was not right. Therefore they quarrelled and he insulted him with his foot. This watchman prays you to peep through this matter.’

A native who had had words with one of our employees attempted to revenge himself by writing to me to accuse his enemy of taking bribes.

‘ I have the honour to inform your kindness,’ says the letter, ‘ that Ahmed Hassan the Chief Porter under your noble direction is taking bibes (*sic*) like hens, eggs, veg., and some other things, and he takes also one pound from every porter. So I beg from your kindness to examine him in this manufacture and to accept my request and highly obliged.’

Revenge is also the motive of another complaint, reading as follows :

‘ I lay this matter before you, as I know you are very fond to know all what your men do. The Inspector at . . . became so proud of himself thinking he was the only chief one there who can do as he likes. He is always willing to mischief the poor in order that he can do what he likes. Also he is a gallant and tries to lead the good women a fast life. That is because he is not willing to be watched by the faithful men of occupation. He is always interfering with some other man’s affairs, and he is hard trying to gather money so much for himself.’

Here is another effort :

‘ SIR, with heart full of deep sympathy and eyes full of hot tears, I am Ahmed Hassan who was dismissed last week, have the honour to inform you :—I am a poor man have crowded children and a wife without state cannot find any way by which I live, that is a case deserving kindness upon justice. What shall I do ? Kindly I beg you sir for the sake of by God to remain me in my job.’



A request for employment was worded in the following confident manner :

'Petitioner, Mohammed Ahmed, your slave, begs to state that he has served the Government in Cairo twenty years, and thanks God he has done his duties most energetically. Born in a tropical country and having spent thirty years in Egypt my body has become damp and now I am very anxious to return to my own place. As you have done me so many kindnesses in the past I shall be obliged if you will recommend me for employment there, as I am poor and am well convinced that the most beloved thing to you is my welfare.'

The correct address on the envelope often puzzles the native greatly. Lord Cromer once received a letter addressed simply to 'The Lord, Cairo.' Sir Eldon Gorst was on one occasion addressed as 'His Majesty Gorst.' Lord Edward Cecil was once the recipient of a letter addressed to 'Sessel the Substitute,' he being then an Under-Secretary of State, an office which is called in Arabic 'El Wakil,' i.e. 'Deputy.'

The native stable-boy in charge of our hospital for sick animals desired a rise in his wages, and wrote me the following petition :

'We respectfully beg to lay before your kind notice. I am Abdullah Ahmed of the animals. I beg to acquainted your Excellency I had been appointed to that place according to your noble order. I beg to inform you Sir from the time in which I worked I got a great tired because I feed buffaloes, camels, she goats, cows, he horses, asses, all these animals with out sickness neither wounds. Although I say to the police officer increase my wages he say No, fool. I beg you to increase my wage and I implore God to grant you a happy life.'

The above letters have been written either by the professional scribes who are generally to be found seated outside the government offices in any provincial town, or by friends of the petitioners who had learnt to write while employed as dragomans or servants in European households. Sometimes, too, a minor clerk in a Government office will not be above writing such a letter in return for a basket of vegetables, let us say, or a couple of pigeons. Such people pride themselves on their knowledge of English, and often display a keen desire to converse or correspond with one another in our language, however slight their acquaintance with its intricacies may be.

An example of the ludicrous results of this affectation is shown upon a sheet of paper which I have before me. At the head of the

paper is my Egyptian secretary's note to a certain station-master, reading, 'Kindly reserve three sleeping baths (berths) on the train to-night.' The station-master sent the note on to the *wagon-lit* inspector with the words, 'Please make the needful and write and obliged.' The inspector forwarded the note to the superintendent with the endorsement, 'Please command'; and that official returned it after adding the words, 'Yours truly, are reserved.' The station-master then received the note and forwarded it to my secretary, with the message: 'Dear. You find your require and oblige'; and my secretary sent it on to me with the final endorsement: 'Sir, the baths are ready.'

There is another class of correspondence of which a few specimens lie before me. These are the letters, petitions, and reports of minor native officials, who, although belonging to the lower classes by birth, have received a good education and speak English with some fluency. Writers of this class generally use language which is somewhat Biblical in character, as will be seen in the following petition:

'SIR, one, only one Kind word from you will go a great way off and do a great deal of good, therefore, I dare write these lines in the hope of getting that good word. I have already been tried in the furnace. Poverty, mortification, and disappointment have done their work upon me, and my soul and body are now sufficiently sick. Will you therefore, have compassion on me and approve my reinstatement in the office from which I was dismissed, as a last chance?'

Here are two short letters of a different type. The first was written by a sporting Egyptian employed in my department, whose pony I had ridden with enjoyment on one or two occasions. It reads:

'As I believe you will be pleased to hear that my horse whom you have loved has gained the first prize in the first course of our Sporting Club races yesterday, therefore I have written these words to you for pleasure.'

The second letter was left at my house on a Christmas Day by another employee, and reads:

'With the greatest pleasure and most gaiety I have come to say happy Christmas to you.'

Both these are typical specimens of a naïve and childlike, but quite charming, class of letter which an English official in Egypt constantly receives.

The following official note was received from an Egyptian of a somewhat nervous temperament :

'The Inspector of . . . begs to inform you that he is quite sure that the robbers will be found in their hiding. When he received your word saying that you would attack them at this midnight his hand shivered with gladness and his heart was full of joy. He will be at the place of meeting with the horses at the time you say, but owing to his mother is about to die he hopes you will not need him to accompany you.'

I must now be permitted to relate a few anecdotes concerning the children of Egypt, which will further display that quality of youthful simplicity which is usually so very engaging, and which leads more often to a convulsion of internal laughter than to an outburst of wrath.

A curious fact in regard to the Egyptian peasant is that, in the manner of a little child, he seldom knows his own age. A lad with a budding moustache will tell you in all seriousness that he is forty, and a wizened old man will, with many gestures indicating his uncertainty, declare himself to be 'perhaps about thirty.' A true story is told of an old native who was taken before the magistrate on a charge of stealing six buns from a pastrycook's shop. Asked what his age was, he replied that he thought he was about 112. The magistrate turned to the clerk and inquired whether any previous offences were recorded against the prisoner. The clerk replied that there seemed to be nothing against him—at any rate not for the last hundred years. The magistrate then addressed the old man once more, and asked him whether he had no grandchildren or other descendants with whom he could live and who could keep him out of mischief. 'Oh,' said the prisoner, 'I am well enough looked after, thank you. I live with mother.'

A somewhat similar tale comes from the upper reaches of the Nile. In the Sudan there are always a large number of camp-followers who do odd jobs for the troops stationed in outlying places, and these men receive daily rations from the War Office, the amount varying according to the age of the individual. A short time ago a grey-haired native sergeant of many years' service asked his commanding officer whether the rations of one of these hangers-on might be increased from those of a boy to those of an adult. 'Why?' asked the officer. 'Is the man more than eighteen years old?' 'Oh yes, I think he *must* be,' said the sergeant after some hesitation. 'He is my father.'

The Egyptian is generally inclined to be very literal in the interpretation of his instructions, and several amusing anecdotes are told in this regard. An English official died suddenly at a lonely outpost in the Sudan, and the Egyptian officer on whom the charge of affairs had devolved wired acquainting the authorities with the sad news. Very wisely the Englishman at headquarters, who had heard stories of persons being buried alive, telegraphed back saying: 'Make certain that he is really dead before burial.' The reply of the Egyptian officer was received a few hours later. It read: 'Have made certain with revolver.'

Another story is told of an Egyptian clerk at a railway station in the far south, who was much disinclined to act on any occasion without precise instructions. One day the officer at the depot received a telegram from him which read: 'Station-master is being devoured by lion on platform. Please wire instructions.' On another occasion this same clerk telegraphed down the line to the nearest English official the following startling message: 'Station attacked by lions, tigers, bears, and wolves.' The Englishman replied: 'Your message ridiculous. Wire precisely what you mean.' To this the clerk, after some hesitation, humbly answered, 'Delete tigers and bears.'

When the great dam at Aswan was being built, the Egyptian Government gave notice to all Nile boatmen that the river would be closed to traffic at this point for the period of one year. In spite of ample warning, however, several vessels arrived from Lower Nubia after the date fixed for the closing of the waterway, and were therefore held up on the south side of the works. After waiting a month or two one of the skippers came to the engineer in charge and asked him how long he would have to wait before he could continue his journey down stream, as he was in somewhat of a hurry.

'Well,' said the official, 'I expect you will have to stay where you are for about ten months more.'

'Thank you, sir,' the boatman answered, quite unmoved. 'Would you be so kind as to lend me a bit of rope? I suppose I shall have to tie up.'

There are times when the simplicity of the Egyptians becomes annoying. Indeed there are occasions when these irresponsible ways lead to very terrible crimes, for which the hangman's rope is none too severe a punishment. A tragic story of this kind was told to me a year or two ago in Upper Egypt. Three young peasants wished to play a practical joke on an unpopular villager, who was

for the moment believed to be absent from home ; and they decided that the most amusing plan would be to enter his house and make hay with his goods and chattels. They therefore went at dead of night to the place, and made an examination to ascertain the easiest manner of forcing an entrance. In the back wall they discovered that several bricks were loose, and by removing these a hole was made of a size sufficient to permit of a child crawling through. With many suppressed giggles they returned to their own dwelling-place and secured the services of a little girl about nine years old who was related to one of their number. They then hurried back to their victim's house, and, telling the girl that she must open one of the doors or windows from the inside, they pushed her through the hole. Now it so happened that the unpopular gentleman had returned from his travels and was asleep within the front chamber ; and very soon the little girl appeared at the hole in the wall, calling to her companions to pull her back again as quickly as possible. At that moment the owner of the house awoke, and, hearing the noise, rushed into the back room. There he saw in the semi-darkness the figure of the girl struggling to escape through the hole, and promptly he seized her by the legs and began to pull. The practical jokers on the other side of the wall, realising what was happening, grabbed the girl's head and also began to pull.

'Allah !' said one of them. 'He'll drag her in and recognise who she is, and then he'll have us up for burglary.'

'Pull !' gasped another ; 'he'll get her !'

'You'll pull her head off if you are not careful,' said the third.

'O well, she's only a girl,' answered his companion. They now each had a hand upon the unfortunate child's head and throat, and with a mighty tug they pulled her through the hole. They then picked up the limp body and raced back to their own home.

'Well, well,' one panted as they sat once more in safety, 'that was a narrow squeak !'

'Poor little girl !' said the second. 'She was a comely lass !'

'Ah me !' sighed the third. 'But we'll give her a good funeral to-morrow.'

Their alternate laughter and tears presently attracted the attention of other members of the family, and soon their crime was out.

During an epidemic of cholera some years ago orders were sent to the native authorities in the villages to 'isolate' any cases of the illness which might be detected. An English official, happening to visit one of these villages a short time after this order had been issued, asked the head man whether any cases of cholera had occurred among his people.

'Only one,' replied the old Egyptian—'a girl. We "isolated" her.'

'Good!' said the Englishman. 'How did you do it?'

The native smiled and drew his finger across his throat. 'With a knife,' he said.

The Egyptian's idea of justice is peculiar; and although the better-class native judges are usually excellent exponents of the law, instances are often to be noticed of an absurdly childish reasoning. A short time ago two natives were had up before the courts on the charge of having carried firearms without licences. In passing sentence the native judge fined one of the offenders one hundred piastres and the other fifty piastres. An English official asked the judge why he had not given the same punishment to both men.

'Well, you see,' said the Egyptian, 'one of the guns was longer than the other.'

So much has been written in regard to native superstitions that little need here be said upon this subject. I cannot refrain, however, from recording one story dealing with this phase of Egyptian life. A native *effendi*, a man of the educated classes, found himself in trouble one morning at the Zoological Gardens in Cairo owing to the fact that he had been observed by one of the keepers to climb the railings surrounding the giraffes' compound, and to open and shut an umbrella several times, apparently for the purpose of frightening one of the animals. When he was closely questioned as to his actions he stated that he had wished to shade the giraffe's neck from the sun, in order that he might have the pleasure of watching the creature shrink to the size of a mouse, a phenomenon which he had been told would occur if a shadow were cast upon that part of its anatomy at noon.

Another native, who had been watching a chimpanzee with awful interest for some time, asked the keeper what manner of diet was provided for animals of that kind. The keeper having told him, the visitor smiled, and, taking his arm, drew him aside. 'Now that nobody can hear what we are saying,' he whispered, 'tell me truly: do you not feed them on the flesh of the criminals who die



in the city prisons ?' As a deterrent to crime it might have been as well had the keeper admitted that such was the case.

Egyptians will believe stories of the wildest kind, which in Europe only a child would accept. For example, when the Aswan Dam was built, many natives declared that the English had only undertaken the work in order to convey the water of the Nile in pipes to England for the benefit of the British farmer. Many of the peasants believe that England is inhabited solely by men who spend one half of the year in digging through perpetual ice and snow for the gold which lies below, and the other half of the year in spending the proceeds of their labours in Egypt, which is obviously the hub of the universe.

This credulity is so general that the native peasant, believing the English official to be similarly minded, often invents, and even acts out, the most absurd story by which to conceal the actual facts of a case. It recently happened that two brothers were followed home one night through the streets of their village by a watchman who regarded them as suspicious characters. Entering their house and shutting the door, the two men observed through the crack that the watchman took up his stand outside. One therefore suggested to the other that they should get him into trouble by accusing him of some unjustified act of violence against themselves ; and it was finally agreed that the elder brother should shoot the younger in the leg, and that they should then declare that the officious watchman was the aggressor. The family gun was procured, the younger brother held out his leg, and the elder fired at him. Unfortunately, however, he was not a good shot, and the wretched victim, receiving the whole charge in his stomach, promptly died. The watchman was at once accused of the crime, and was sent to prison on a charge of manslaughter. He also had a brother ; and this man, thirsting for revenge, went to the enemy's house, and there shot himself in the leg, declaring to the people who rushed in that he had been the victim of a murderous assault. His story, however, was not believed, and at length the whole tale came out.

A year or two ago some natives who were harvesting in their fields sent one of their women down to the river for water. As she was returning with the water-jar upon her head, a boy of about fifteen years of age belonging to another family asked her to let him drink from the jar. This she refused to do, there was a quarrel, and the woman received a knife-wound from which she died. The boy's family at once handed him over to the relatives of the victim,



and made no attempt to shield him from the consequences of his act. The aggrieved party, however, were by no means satisfied. 'This is all very well,' they said, 'but you have killed one of our finest women, and you offer us a miserable little boy as the murderer. That will not do at all.' They therefore accused the headman of the offending family, and concocted their story so well that he was found guilty and sent to penal servitude.

In conclusion I must relate one more story in order to illustrate the peculiar manner in which tragedy and comedy go hand in hand amongst the children of Egypt. A well-known robber was arrested at a small station in the Sudan during the time when martial law was still in force; and he was promptly sentenced to death. The solitary English officer in charge of the post refrained from attending the execution, the arrangements for which were left to the discretion of his Egyptian colleagues. A gibbet was erected, and about nine o'clock on the next morning the condemned man was driven up to it in a mule-cart. The rope was passed round his neck, the mule was whipped up, and the cart passed from under the feet of the victim, who was left swinging in mid-air. The officer, however, had forgotten to tie the man's hands; and he promptly swarmed up the rope to the cross-beam, there seating himself comfortably in the piping-hot sunshine, while the troops stood gaping around him, the officer mopping his forehead in an ecstasy of heat and vexation. Nobody knew what to do. They could not shoot the man, for their orders were to hang him; and on the barren, sandy ground no stones could be found to throw at him in order to dislodge him. The Egyptian officer therefore entered into friendly conversation with him, begging him to come down and be hanged like a man, instead of sitting up there swinging his legs like a monkey. This the robber totally refused to do, and he declared that nothing short of a free pardon would induce him to descend. The officer therefore endeavoured to appeal to the man's better feelings. 'Look here,' he said, 'it is all very nice for you, sitting up there in the breeze, but down here it is dreadfully hot; and, you know, none of us have yet had our breakfasts, and we are feeling extraordinarily faint and uncomfortable. Please do come down and be hanged properly, or I, for my part, will most certainly be sick.'

The robber, however, refused to move; and at last the English officer was sent for, who, acting in accordance with an unwritten law, pardoned him there and then, thereby enlisting the faithful services of a scout who has since done very valuable work.

# THE OLD CONTEMPTIBLES: IN REST.

BY BOYD CABLE.

'ANYBODY awake?' said Second Lieutenant Smith in low tones, and in immediate reply there came a simultaneous 'Yes' from two blanketed bundles lying along the wall on the stone floor of the farmhouse kitchen. Smith freed his shoulders of the blanket and rose on his elbow, but, struck at once by the chill dampness of the air, sank back and snuggled down luxuriously in the warm 'flea-bag.' 'Isn't this gorgeous?' he exclaimed. 'No need to get up, nothing special to do when we are up, and nothing to prevent us going to bed again as early as we like.'

'Funny thing is,' said Walker, another subaltern, 'that when we have a chance like this to sleep as late as we like, we're all wide awake.'

The Captain, the third man on the floor, laughed. 'It was nothing but a few hens clucking that woke me,' he said. 'That's queer, too, when you remember how sound we sleep as a rule through the devil's own row the guns make.'

'Of course,' said Walker, with sudden understanding. 'That's what seems so unnatural. I couldn't think what made everything so different. It's waking up and not hearing a sound of guns. How many months is it since we've done that?'

'August,' said Smith reflectively. 'September, October, November, and this is December—somewhere round four months, I suppose.'

'Not much wonder we miss 'em,' said the Captain and reached out a hand to the tunic spread over the foot of his blankets and fumbled a cigarette case out of the pocket. He lit a cigarette and wriggled the blankets up round his shoulders again. 'Um-m-m,' he murmured. 'This is fine, isn't it,' and 'Ripping,' 'Top-hole,' agreed the others cordially.

There came a cautious knock at the door and on the shouted command 'Come in' one of the *batmen* looked in. 'Just wanted to see if any of you were awake, sir,' he said. 'No need to disturb you if you wasn't.' He vanished abruptly, but next minute returned bearing three steaming bowls.

'Tea,' said Smith, delightedly sniffing at the bowl set beside him on the floor. 'Tea' chorussed the other two. 'Thanks,' 'Brilliant idea, Johnson.'

'Don't tell me, Johnson, *don't* tell me there's fresh milk in it.'

'There is, sir,' said Johnson, with obvious pride in the announcement. 'And there's fresh milk for breakfast. I got near a pint of it this mornin'.'

'Fresh milk—and I heard hens clucking this morning. Johnson, I b'lieve you're going to tell me there'll be eggs for breakfast,' said Walker.

'No, sir,' said Johnson, regretfully. 'Not this morning. But I might manage to get some in a day or two. Hens don't lay much in this weather, sir.'

'And I don't blame the hens,' put in the Captain. 'Seems to me nothing but a duck or a fish gets any encouragement to carry on business in this country. 'Suppose it's still raining, Johnson? But it is. I can hear it.'

'Personally,' said Walker, 'I don't care if it does rain. Makes it all the jollier knowing you haven't to go out in it and swim up a flooded trench to an Observation Station.'

'It's only seven o'clock,' said Smith, looking at his wrist watch. 'I'm going to go to sleep again for an hour. Not that I want it, but just for the satisfaction of being able to do it.'

'I'm going to lie awake and gloat over not having to get up,' said the Captain. 'It's too precious a feeling to waste in sleep.'

'We'll have the same every morning for some weeks with any luck,' said Walker.

'Tea in bed—fresh milk—a dry roof over us—a possibility of eggs—for days and days and days. If I'm dreaming it all please don't waken me for a bit,' pleaded Smith.

'Luxury—bloated, bulgin' luxury,' murmured Walker.

At any other time and place 'luxury' would have been about the last word to apply to the quarters they occupied. Three of them slept with nothing but a canvas valise and a blanket between them and the cold stone floor; their room was the stone and mud-walled living-room and kitchen of a farmhouse, with a tiny little stove about the size and shape of a porridge pot and a stove-pipe leading up into a yawning chimney. Down the chimney, through a gaping void under the ill-hung door, by cracks in the plank ceiling and crevices round the badly fitted window, damp and icy draughts came and went continually; in a corner of the room stood a stone sink, with an iron pump rising through the floor beside it and its long handle projecting into the room; the surplus water which, pumped vigorously, splashed out of the sink and down into a wide pool on the floor, meandered round and finally made an exit through

a hole in the wall near the pump foot—a hole which also provided an entrance for another stream of cold wind; the furniture was of the roughest description, a heavy wooden table, a couple of chairs and a number of deal ration boxes for seats; the floor was fouled with clods of mud mixed with manure and dirty straw carried in by heavy-booted feet entering from the farmyard outside the door; and across the room from the one entrance door to another leading to a further room ran a wet and mud-tramped passage where the farm people, men and women, moved to and fro. A true description of the room would simply have been that it was a dirty, cold, damp, squalid, ill-furnished and utterly comfortless hovel. Yet the three men lying on the stone floor had no faintest intention of being sarcastic when they spoke of comfort or 'luxury.' After all these terms are merely a matter of comparison, and the three were making their comparison with other dwelling places in trenches and dug-outs, and with the shell-smashed billets they had inhabited for months past. Outside the door footsteps tramped and kicked energetically for a minute, the door flung open, and a rubber-booted, mackintoshed figure stamped in.

'Hullo, not up yet; and getting on for eight o'clock,' shouted the newcomer. 'Rouse ye, rouse, my merry, merry men,' he carolled at the pitch of his voice.

'Shut up, Blinker. Go'n see a doctor about it if it's bad enough to make you scream in agony like that,' said Smith. 'But don't come bawling in here disturbing people in the middle of the night.'

'Selfish animal,' said Walker, sitting up and hugging his knees. 'Just because he has to get up for morning stables he can't let anyone else enjoy five minutes' peaceful slumber. But just wait, my Blinker. My turn to be up to-morrow, and see how long I leave you to sleep.'

'Your turn to-morrow, and Smiffums next day,' said Blinker joyfully. 'Two whole mornings I lie in bed until eight o'clock, and again burst into song. 'Oh let us be joyful; joyful, jo-oyful, jo-hoy-ful!' until his *batman* arrived with a pail of cold and a mugful of hot water. Blinker threw off his streaming mackintosh and tossed it into a corner, pulled off his 'coat warm British' and clad in gum boots, breeches and vest, proceeded to shave. The other two emerged reluctantly from their blankets and began shiveringly to hurry into their clothes. Walker stripped to the waist was beginning to wash in a canvas bucket, Smith in his pants and one sock was negotiating the first leg of his breeches when the door opened unceremoniously and a young woman walked in and,

taking no more notice of them than to drop a brief '*B'jour, messieurs*,' went to the corner and pumped up a pailful of water, lifted it and walked out.

'I say,' ejaculated Walker faintly. 'That's a bit—eh what.'

'Ra-ther,' said Smith, who had subsided hurriedly and endeavoured to hide his unclothed legs under the blanket.

'Bless you, my children, that's all right,' said Blinker cheerfully. 'They don't seem to mind it, so why should we?'

'I dunno why,' returned Smith. 'But fact remains I do. Johnson, just lock that door till I get my breeches on at least. No lock? Well, stand with your back against the door a minute'; and while Johnson stood sentry he hastily pulled on some clothes. Blinker chuckled through his soap-suds. 'You were too sound asleep to know it,' he said, 'but the whole blessed family, includin' grandmother, mother, and daughters ranging from thirty down to about thirteen-year-old, have been promenadin' to and fro through this blessed room since long before daybreak.'

'Well as you say, Blinker, if they don't mind, why should we?' said the Captain and continued his washing.

While they finished dressing the room was converted from a bedroom to a breakfast room by the simple process of rolling up the blankets and the valises together against the wall, and laying the breakfast table with an old newspaper for tablecloth and cups and plates of enamelled iron.

The Major came along from another room, a cupboard-sized room he had secured as a sleeping place. Smiling and apparently well content with the world he rubbed his hands and looked cheerfully round the dreary room. 'Morning all,' he said in reply to their salutations. 'Yes, I slept well—except that I kept waking all the morning and wondering what was the matter. Found it was the unearthly quiet that disturbed me—not hearing the guns rumbling, y'know.'

'I noticed the same thing,' said the Captain. 'But what I notice more is the blessed relief of being away from the sound of shells going over the roof, and the chance of one coming through at any minute.'

'Bit chilly in here, isn't it?' said the Major. 'What about a fire?'

'No coal or wood to be had, sir,' said the *batman* who was bringing in the breakfast. 'People here are very hard up for any sort of fuel, sir, and can't spare any. They say they've hardly enough for their own cooking.'

'We'll see to-day if the Quartermaster can't raise some,' said the Captain.

'I found a big wash-tub the farm people have,' said Blinker. 'Just the thing for a bath. If we can find some fuel we can start a series of hot baths all round.'

'Hot bath,' said the Major gloatingly. 'And get into slacks after it and sit over a blazing fire. Sounds pretty good.'

'Some of us might ride into —— this afternoon, sir,' said Smith, 'and see if we can do some shopping. I have heard that it's possible to buy a bottle of whisky there.'

'By all means,' said the Major. 'Try for some meat, too—we're still on a half ration of frozen meat, half bully beef, y'know—and any sort of fresh green vegetables would be a Godsend.'

After breakfast they all dawdled in delightful laziness over a smoke, and then the subalterns went off to look round the lines. The Captain accompanied Blinker and they picked a way through the dirty farmyard, down a muddy lane, and into a field where the horses were tied in long lines. There was no picking a way over the field and through the horse lines. They simply had to plough through the ankle-deep mud into which the soft ground had already been churned. The horses stood dejectedly with drooped heads and with the driving rain running in rivulets off them, or moved restlessly, lipping over the wet ground in vain search for a blade of grass or a dropped grain of corn.

'They look pretty tucked up,' said the Captain critically. 'And this field will be knee deep in liquid mud in about a couple of days. I'm going to hunt round and see if I can't find some sort of cover to get them under.'

The Sergeant Major joined them, but shook his head in answer to the Captain's suggestion. 'No chance of cover for horses, I'm afraid, sir,' he said. 'As a matter of fact there's little enough cover for the men; and some of the barns they're in have been leaking so badly the men preferred to move out and put up any sort of bivouacs they could. You see where they've pitched them in the lee of the hedge there.'

The Captain walked over with him to inspect the 'bivvies.' They were the flimsiest of shelters built with waterproof groundsheets and bits of sacking spread over rough frameworks of branches and twigs. The Captain looked at them doubtfully.

'Poor sort of shelter,' he commented, and spoke to a couple of the Gunners squatted inside one shack. 'That's pretty mucky,

isn't it, Potts? Aren't you better off in the barn? No, don't come out; stay where you are.'

'We'd rather be 'ere, sir,' said Potts cheerfully. 'It isn't too bad, an' it's a little drier an' a lot warmer than the barn. We was near froze last night. An' there's no rats 'ere. The barn's fair movin' wi' them.'

'I can't see that you're drier there,' said the Captain, still very doubtfully. 'At least you have dry ground under you in the barn.'

'We got some twigs under us 'ere, sir,' said the other man, hitching himself aside so that the Captain could see. 'Our ground-sheets is on the roof but we 'ave our mackintoshes under us. An' sleepin' together with our two blankets over we're all *teek*.'

The Captain fidgeted a little longer, but finally gave in and left the men in their 'bivvies.' The little affair, the manner of his judgment and the acceptance of it reminded one of nothing so much as a somewhat fussy mother giving her children permission to play some game where she feared they might get their feet wet. He carried on with the mothering performance for an hour longer, inspecting the men's barns and directing them how to attempt a stoppage of the roof leakages, holding an anxious conference with the Sergeant Major and Quartermaster Sergeant on the possibilities of rigging up a wagon cover to hold water, of the cooks heating up water to give the men baths in turn, of the provision of fuel for the fires; bargaining with the women of near-by cottages over the prices at which they would undertake to wash the men's underclothes; walking round the horses with the section officers and advising on treatment of galls, of this horse to be left off any work for a few days, of that one to get an extra handful of corn.

Then he left the lines and ploughed off through the mud back to the farmhouse billet whistling softly and contentedly to himself over a good morning's work and the pleasurable results that should accrue to all concerned.

'Get those baths going first minute you can,' had been his final word. 'The men must want 'em pretty bad.'

'They do so, sir,' agreed the Sergeant Major. 'And it's hard to say whether it's us or our clothes that want it worst. The battery's just fair lousy, sir, and that's the only word for it.'

'Small wonder,' said the Captain. 'Well, get the baths going and give 'em all the washing they want as long as we're out on rest.'

Arriving back at the billet he found a small but very cheerful wood fire crackling in the tiny stove.



'Hullo, Johnson, where did you manage to forage the wood?' he demanded, and Johnson explained glibly that it was just a little bit he had 'picked up.'

'Picked up,' repeated the Captain suspiciously. 'Not any of those big hop-poles out of the fields, I hope.'

Johnson assured him that no hop-hole had been touched. 'Though I admit, sir, it does seem 'ard seein' all them poles about, an' we mustn't take one, even a broke one, though we 'aven't a splinter of fire an' might be freezin' to death.'

'Maybe,' said the Captain. 'But you heard the orders given to the troops about taking any wood, and especially about touching fences or hop-poles. And if the Officers' Mess breaks the rule the men can't be expected to keep it. So don't try coming the old soldier over it or there'll be trouble.'

The door flung open with a bang and the three junior officers bundled in.

'Have you heard . . . isn't it great . . . couldn't believe it . . . true enough though. . . . What luck, what toppin' . . . ' they rattled excitedly.

'Here, here, what's all the *tamasha*? Heard what? What luck? One at a time, please.'

'Leave,' exploded Blinker.

'Yes, leave . . . leave to England,' chorussed the other two, and between them showered fragments of excited explanation and comment on the listener, while Blinker chanted joyfully:

'Oh Indi-a-a's a beautiful land, bee-yewtiful land to view  
Over the rail of the *Jumna's* stern, above the bumping screw,  
While a Lascar hand on the fo'c's'l' head howls "Hum deckty  
hai,"

And we're out'ard bound for Blighty till our leaves roll by.'

'Oh, shut up, Blinker,' shouted the Captain. 'What *are* you fellows gassing about? *Who's* going on leave? Who said anything about—'

'Let me tell him,' said Blinker. 'Lemme break the glad tidings. Listen, *mong capitaine*—we're all goin' on leave—all going in turn—the Division's goin'—forty-eight whole hours in England—forty-eight crowded hours of joyful life in blessed old Blighty. Two officers per Battery—the Adjutant just told us—that'll be you and the Major for first turn. . . . And, by the way, where's the Major?'

On inquiry it was found that the Major had gone to Headquarters billets a mile away, called by an orderly with an urgent message half an hour since.

'Of course,' said Blinker. 'Sent for to be told to bundle and go. "An' we're out'ard bound for Blighty. . . ." All right, all right. I won't sing if you don't like it.'

'It's true enough, Skipper,' said Smith. 'Forty-eight hours' leave to England. You heard, of course, that some of the other Divisions started leaves a week or two ago.'

'Heard all sorts of yarns about it,' admitted the Captain. 'But I thought it was on special application—"urgent private affairs" sort of thing.'

'Not so, dear one,' said Blinker. 'All officers and so many n.c.o.'s and men through the Division. Oh, Lord, think of it. London for forty-eight hours! How many hot baths d'you suppose a man can get into forty-eight hours?'

'Does it mean forty-eight hours from the time we leave here, or from the time we land?' said the Captain, abandoning all further disbelief.

That started an argument, and for half an hour they wrangled and laughed and talked, and laid minute and exact plans and divisions of the leave hours, and discussed what theatres they would go to, and at what restaurants they would eat, what they would have for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

'Only thing that worries me,' said Blinker, 'is whether to spend the whole forty-eight hours in a beautiful soft bed with white sheets on it, or to stop awake the whole time and get every minute I can eating and drinking and bathing and taking every pretty girl I know out to teas and things. 'Tisn't long enough, y'know. We should have two forty-eight hour-zzez—one to sleep through, and one to enjoy.'

'Hog,' said Smith. 'Never satisfied. Whoever heard of leaves home from a war before? You'll be wanting reg'lar week-ends home next.'

'Here's the Major,' said Blinker. 'He'll tell us all about it. Pray Heaven it's a full forty-eight—'

But their chatter and their beaming smiles died away as the Major walked in and looked round them with a deadly serious face. 'He hasn't heard,' said Blinker suddenly. 'Great news, sir. The Adjutant just told us . . .'

'I know,' said the Major. 'About home leaves. But that is

off. I've just seen the General, and we're going into action again . . . at once. One or two batteries badly knocked out up there and we're wanted to lend a hand. We'll be attached to another Division for a few weeks.'

There was silence for a minute. 'Few weeks,' said the Captain. 'That means the Division's rest will be over—and we'll miss our turn, I suppose.'

'I'm afraid so,' said the Major slowly. 'The General said it would probably mean that. I found all the other Battery Commanders with him when I got there. He only wanted one Battery, and left it to us to volunteer or draw lots. As we're the senior Battery I had first choice . . . and I volunteered.' He glanced round the four faces and waited a moment to give them the chance to speak, or—what would be equally significant—be silent.

The Captain backed him swiftly, as a good second-in-command knowing a good commander should. 'Of course,' he said, 'after all, we *are* the senior Battery.'

And the others without even waiting for him to finish speaking echoed his 'Of course' emphatically. 'Glad you didn't toss for it, sir,' said Blinker sturdily. 'Awful chowse it would have been if one of the others had snapped the job from under our noses.'

'I might have tossed,' said the Major quietly, but with a prideful glint in his eye, 'if I hadn't thought you'd all have felt the same about it as myself.'

That afternoon the Battery moved out from its camp and rumbled and squelched down the muddy lane on to the muddy main road. At the turn, mired already to its middle and muffled to its wet ears, it waited a minute for a crawling convoy to move clear, and the gunners of one of the other batteries camped there moved to the roadside and offered sympathy and frank commiseration. 'Missin' your turn of leave too,' said one. 'Perishin' 'ard luck that is.'

The driver he addressed screwed sideways in his saddle and spoke loftily, 'Leaves! There might be leaves again any time. But it isn't every day there's a chance to get an extra bar to our medals that not another Battery in the Division 'll 'ave. We thought o' that, y'see——' (he raised his voice to a nicely clear carrying pitch) 'We thought o' that, when *we* volunteered for the job.'

### A ROGUE BISON.

NEXT to the man-eating tiger there is nothing a native dreads more in the jungles than a rogue bison. The man-eater is understandable and open in his dealings. He takes a certain tract of country or stretch of lonely road for his own, and there he reigns supreme in the terror of his reputation. You make your will and say your prayers before you go a-wayfaring in his dominions, and if you chance to meet with the evil genius of the place you—or rather your friends—accept the result as kismet, 'the inevitable.' But the rogue bison and his ways are never reducible to rule. He is an abortion in the jungle, a gratuitous horror. The yellow man-eating tiger is at least a daylight death, the black bison, lurking in the innermost forest shadows at unlikely places, is a twilight nightmare, a treacherous, unlooked-for form of demise, and that is why Hindoo and half-caste alike hate him so.

A district where I once camped on the Western Ghauts was haunted by such a *gaur*, a cunning old villain who was a choice terror of all the neighbourhood, and especially frequented a mile or two of hill-side visible from my tent door. This hill was well wooded along the ridge, while its slope was scored with water-courses and scattered rocks, both half hidden in high lemon-grass. In such a place in India anything that flies or runs may be found at different times of the day, and here the bull was accustomed to sleep in the overhanging wood through the hot hours, only coming out to feed in the open at either twilight.

'A bad beast, sahib; a very wicked beast, with Satan his very self inside of him!' I had listened to the tale of his misdeeds over the camp fire for many evenings in succession, until I began to imbibe my men's opinion of that *gaur* as something uncanny, but while they stopped at this point of tremulous abuse, my spirit was moved to something more energetic. Even then the bull might still have held his evil way as far as I was concerned, for there was important work on hand at the moment; but it chanced that two mornings before my stay in the district was up, he took it into his misguided head to chase and all but kill the wife of one of my men as she was returning to camp by a short cut across the grassy ridge a mile away. This was the affront direct, an open challenge which could not be overlooked. 'Unless the sahib helps us we

shall all be killed for certain ! ' said the headman of the village that evening as he poured forth the tale of his woes in the midst of a sympathetic circle of listeners. After such an appeal the sahib could not decently leave the common enemy in possession. Briefly I determined to go and look for that bison the very next dawn, and to go alone. It was not a wise resolve, but there it was, and after a few hours' sleep I was up ; a light breakfast eaten, and with some biscuits in my pocket, and a double-barrelled rifle over my shoulder, I set out for the far hill-side.

There was no chance of the big beast being near the camp, so I was able to follow the jungle path over stream and up the opposite slope for a mile with confidence. It was dark as pitch, however, so dark that the track was scarcely visible below, while above the inky canopy of the forest was only broken here and there by faint patches of purple sky dusted with golden stars, and the silence was oppressive. Such sounds as there were became magnified out of all reason. The rustle of a snake over the dead leaves, the cough of a half-awakened monkey in a distant tree-top set my nerves fluttering as they would never have done in daylight, and thus it came about that I was very glad when the path began to ascend less abruptly, while a faint glimmer amongst the tall stems told that the forest was thinning out and day approaching. Another ten minutes and I was on the lemon-grass slope near the point of a long triangle of woodland, whence it was possible to command a mile of view in either direction, and here, clear at last of the black shadows, with the sky quickly softening to lavender above me, I climbed a lookout point and sat down to await the sun, and the ' bad old bull.' When and where would he appear ? There was no knowing, nor what might happen on his arrival. I was content to think there was more chance of seeing the beast thus single-handed than by trying to get him in rough country, with beaters and tom-toms and all the artifices of regular shooting. So I munched a biscuit and thought of the medieval Earl of Warwick who, if tradition speaks truly, killed a troublesome forest bull with his battle-axe. Would any bard put my achievement, if it came off, into a ballad ? It was not likely. They might talk about it in the lowland villages for a week or two, and the *gaur's* great crescent horns would presently go to decorate the hall of a very far away Kentish mansion ! Well, that was enough, and here, meanwhile, was the sunrise coming. If the slayer of women and children was to appear at all, now was the time when he might be reasonably

expected to rouse and come out to breakfast in the open, while the dew was still cool and fresh on the under grass.

Stronger and stronger grew the yellow glow in the east, more and more rosy the vault overhead. A cold breath crept over the misty hill-side as the gleam concentrated into one dazzling patch above the hills, and in that refulgence the big sun was born, the shadows became definite, the light rushed in a flood across the hill-sides, and with a clamour of many voices the life of forest and valley responded to the call of the day. Where was the bull? Again and again I looked over the slopes and down the fringe of the woods in eager expectation. Bah! his wickedness was slothful! Quite half an hour had gone by; in another twenty minutes the best feeding time would be past, and I should have had my walk for nothing. I looked a long time northward, then in the other direction for several minutes, then to the north again, and there, not a quarter of a mile away, standing on a rocky bluff, a huge red form clearly silhouetted against the sky, was the beast in question. How he had got there so secretly I did not stop to ask, but crouched out of sight while I took stock of the situation. Just below where I was sitting ran a shallow nullah, and a couple of hundred yards down its course rose a clump of bushes on the further bank between the nullah and the bull; if I could reach the shelter it might be possible to get a shot without being seen. Sliding into the watercourse with all possible speed, I crawled on hands and knees till the bushes were between myself and the place where the bison had stood. Then scrambling on to the bank I ran in a crouching position through the clump, and after a minute to regain breath, peeped cautiously through the outskirts of the screen. The bison had gone! Since he was not on this side of the bluff he must needs be on the other, and I ran across the intervening open as quickly and quietly as could be. The ledge was all short grass and bare rock, like a Dartmoor tor in miniature, and up it I went, never doubting the enemy was on the other side. Once on top I threw myself, panting, under a big grey stone and peeped down the opposite escarpment. Again there was no bull in sight. I lay breathless on the hot, glittering mica slabs for several minutes, staring this way and that, marvelling where the beast had got to. I had fully expected to see him in the dried grass below, for that was the direction he had apparently taken in descending, but the lemon-grass was gently rocking in the morning wind undisturbed by bovine presence. He was not amongst the stone heaps

nor in the nullah, and being assured of that I turned slowly round as I sat, finger on trigger, and then imagine my astonishment when, on looking up hill, I suddenly found myself face to face with the terror of the forest, and not more than thirty yards of flat rock separating us !

He had gone off the narrow ledge, but instead of going to feed by the stream, as I had taken for granted he would, the bison had turned sharp up, and perhaps winding me, had clambered back on to the rock to have a look round, and so come out on top of where I was crouching. And remarkably handsome he looked. I did not grudge him that tribute as we stared at each other over the narrow intervening space. From where I sat the sunlight was full on his flank, and his hide shone under it like metal. His great horns were polished crescents on either side of his head ; his huge black nozzle was distended and twitching as he ' snuffed the tainted gale ' that, no doubt, had such a suggestion of human being in it ; and his wicked, bloodshot eyes gleamed fiercely at me from the corners of a mighty forehead. It seemed quite a long time while I was taking in these particulars, but, meditating it afterwards, I am inclined to think it could not have been more than a few seconds, and then the slayer of helpless herdsmen, the dread of women and children, the horror of the jungle paths began to stamp with his fore hoofs while his nostrils opened and contracted as he worked himself into a passion. He was not going to run away, and, still a little out of breath, I turned round and, facing him on one knee, fired somewhat hastily. The bullet struck high between neck and shoulder, and the next moment, with a tremendous bellow, the bull charged full tilt. He came down in a storm of dust and rattling stones, and as there was nothing else to do, and no possibility of taking cover, I waited till he was nearly within arm's reach, and then jumped aside. Unfortunately, the ground was treacherous, my foot slipped, and as the animal blundered roaring by, I fell head over heel to the side of him. The slope of the ground was then my saving, for it was so slippery, owing to the loose surface, that the beast could not pull up quickly, but shot past about fifteen yards or so. I came to a standstill a little before he did, and having fortunately retained my hold on the rifle, opened the breech and, keeping an eye carefully on my friend the meanwhile, slipped in another cartridge.

Then once more we faced each other, I this time on rather higher ground, but both of us breathing heavily and both obviously



determined to see the thing through. There was no time for sentiment; I felt I was avenging all those unhappy coolies who had been done to death by the brute in making away with him, and I knew he intended in return to make away with me if by any possible chance he might accomplish it. We stood facing each other for a few minutes, and I had time to glance overhead, where a harpy, who had come down from the woods to see the fun, was sailing in easy circles above us. Even at that moment I could not help thinking what a beautiful sight the black and white bird made as, with motionless wings and barred tail extended, a great snow-flake against the untroubled blue of the morning sky, he floated eagerly round, crying the while 'Meat for somebody, meat for somebody!' as he looked down on the field of combat and foresaw a breakfast. Then again catching my breath, up went the rifle and I gave the *gaur* another shot full in the chest. It was a staggering blow, he fairly reeled under it, and for a minute it seemed he would go down. But there are few tougher things than an old bull bison when the fighting fervour is on him, and this one was no exception to the rule. He bellowed with rage and pain, put down his head, gave his tail a vicious flick, and charged again with extraordinary swiftness. I stepped aside, and the beast made a swinging cut at me with his horns as he passed. A little nearer and this humble narrative had never been written. But now my chance had come. As the bull floundered by, I fired point blank into his skull behind the ear. Nothing could stand that. He went down with a tremendous thud, turned over on his side, kicked once or twice, and then lay quite still! He was dead, and the harpy overhead gave a scream of delight, and hurried off to fetch its mate from the other side of the ridge.

That evening there were great rejoicings in the village, no end of chattering round the big fig-tree, and a vast amount of drum beating and garland wearing. I had, as usual, to contribute to the expenses of the festivities, and to receive a deputation of the village elders, who said things about me which I could not dream of repeating. I answered briefly that I was very glad to have been of service to them, but privately I found their gratitude much more embarrassing than anything else in the adventure.

EDWIN L. ARNOLD.

*THE LUCK OF THE NAVY: HOW THE  
'SYDNEY' MET THE 'EMDEN.'*

BY BENNET COPPLESTONE.

THE Luck of the Navy is not always good. There are wardrooms in the Grand Fleet within which to mention any luck except of the most devilish blackness may lead to blasphemy and even to blows. One can sympathise. Those who sped on May 31 last across four hundred miles of sea and who, though equipped with all the paraphernalia of fire-directors, spotting-officers, range-finders, control instruments, grizzled gun-layers and tremendous wire-wound guns, failed to get in a single shot at an elusive enemy, are dangerous folk to chaff. If to them had been vouchsafed the great chance which came to the Salt of the Earth and the Fifth B. S. there would not now be a German battleship afloat! Still, in face of blazing examples of ill-luck such as this, I will maintain that there are pixies sitting up aloft who have a tender regard for the Royal Navy and who, every now and then, ladle out to it toothsome morsels of unexpected, astounding, incredible Luck.

For how else can one explain the action at the Falkland Islands? There was sheer luck in every detail of it, luck piled upon luck. Sturdee with his two battle-cruisers raced through 7000 miles of ocean, from Plymouth to Port Stanley, and not a whisper of his coming sped over the wireless to von Spee. Yet hundreds knew of Sturdee's mission—even I knew before he had cleared the English Channel. During five weeks, from the Coronel battle until December 7, the Falkland Islands were exposed helpless to a raid by von Spee's victorious squadron. Yet he delayed his coming until December 8—the day after the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* had arrived to gobble him up. As if these two miracles were not sufficient—a month of silence in those buzzing days of enemy agents and wireless telegraphy, and von Spee's arrival off Port Stanley at the moment most dangerous for him and most convenient for us—the Fates worked for the Navy yet another. They gave to Sturdee upon December 8, 1914, perfect weather, full visibility, and a quiet sea in a corner of ocean where rain and fog are the rule and clear weather almost a negligible exception. The Falkland Islands do not see half a dozen such days as that December 8 in the whole

circuit of the year. Von Spee came and to Sturdee were granted a long southern summer day, perfect visibility, a limitless ocean of space, and a benign easy swell to swing the gunsights kindly upon their mark. It was a day that gunners pray for, sometimes dream of, but very rarely experience in battle.

Less conspicuously but not less benignantly did the kindly Fates work up the scene for the destruction of the *Emden*. They made all their preparations in silence and then switched up the curtain at the moment chosen by themselves. In the Falkland Islands action Luck interposed to perfect the Navy's long-laid plans and to add to the scheme those artistic touches of which man unaided is incapable. But the *Sydney-Emden* action was fortuitous, quite unplanned, flung off at a moment when Luck might have seemed to be wholly on the side of the raider. The *Emden* had destroyed 70,000 tons of shipping in seven weeks and vanished after each exploit upon an ocean which left no tracks. She seemed to be as elusive and dangerous as the Flying Dutchman. But perhaps her commander, von Müller, a most ingenious and gallant seaman, had committed that offence which the Athenians and Eton boys call hubris, and had neglected to pay due homage for the good fortune which was poured upon him in plenty. For the Fates wearied of their sport with him and with us, withdrew their mantle of protection, and suddenly delivered the *Emden* to the *Sydney* with that artistic thoroughness which may always be seen in their carefully planned work. Luck is no bungler, but Luck is a most jealous mistress. If Sturdee and Glossop are wise they will sacrifice their dearest possessions while there is yet time. The *Invincible* is at the bottom of the North Sea and the *Inflexible* was mined in the Dardanelles. The *Sydney* is a pretty little ship and I should grieve to see her suffer for her good luck of two years ago.

\* \* \* \* \*

Take a chart of the Indian Ocean and draw a line from Fremantle in Australia to Colombo in Ceylon. The middle point of this line will be seen to lie about fifty miles east of the Cocos-Keeling Islands. Now draw another line from Cocos to the Sunda strait, a line which will be seen to bisect at right angles the Fremantle-Colombo line. After this exercise in Euclid examine that point without parts and without magnitude, fifty miles east of Cocos, where the tracks intersect. It is a very interesting point, for upon the tropical night of November 8, 1914, it was being approached by two hostile naval forces each of which was entirely ignorant of the nearness of the

other. Coming up from Australia bound for Colombo steamed a fleet of transports under the charge of Captain Silver of H.M. Australian light cruiser *Melbourne*. Upon the left of Captain Silver, and nearest to the Cocos Islands, was Captain Glossop in the sister ship *Sydney*, and away to the right was a Japanese light cruiser. Upon the line from the Sunda strait to the Cocos Islands was steaming the famous raider *Emden*, with an attendant collier, bound upon a mission of destruction there. The *Emden* crossed the head of the convoy about three hours before it reached the point of intersection of the two tracks, and went on to demolish the cable and wireless station on the Islands. Meanwhile, wholly unconscious of the scene-setting upon which the Fates were busy, the convoy sailed on, crossed the *Emden's* track and cut that vessel off from any chance of escape to the east. To the west the ocean stretches unbroken for limitless miles. At half-past six in the morning the *Emden* appeared off the Cocos Islands and the watching wireless operators at once sent out a warning to all whom it might concern that a foreign warship was in sight. It greatly concerned Captain Silver of the *Melbourne*, who ordered Captain Glossop to proceed in the *Sydney* to the Islands in order to investigate. The *Sydney* was nearest to the Islands, was a clean ship not three weeks out of dock, was in trim for the highest possible speed and, though largely manned by men in course of training, was in charge of experienced officers 'lent' by the Royal Navy to the Australian Fleet Unit.

In the old sailing-ship days it was more common than it is now for fighting ships to pass close to one another without detection. Whole fleets used then to do it in a way which now seems almost unbelievable. The classical example is that of Napoleon and Nelson in June 1798. On the night of June 30-July 1, Napoleon with a huge fleet of transports, escorted by Admiral Brueys' squadron, crossed the Gulf of Candia and reached Alexandria on the afternoon of the 1st. Nelson, who had been at Alexandria in search of his enemy, left on June 29, and sailed slowly against adverse winds to the north. Though the French and British fleets covered scores of miles of sea they passed across one another, each without suspicion of the presence of the other. Nelson was very short of frigates. It is not remarkable that the British convoy and the *Emden* on the night of November 8, 1914, should so nearly have met without mutual detection; what is wonderful is that the *Emden* should have chosen the day and hour for raiding the Cocos Islands when a

greatly superior British force was barely fifty miles distant and placed by accident in a position which cut off all prospect of escape. It was a stroke of Luck for us which exactly paralleled the occasion of von Spee's raid a month later upon the Falkland Islands.

By seven o'clock Glossop and the *Sydney* were ready to leave upon their trip of investigation—they had no knowledge of what was before them—and during the next two and a quarter hours they steamed at twenty knots towards the distant cable station. In the meantime the *Emden* had sent a boat ashore and the work of destruction of the station was completed by 9.20 A.M. Everything fitted exactly into its place, for the Fates are very pretty workmen. The *Emden* knew nothing of the *Sydney's* coming, but as Glossop sped along his wireless receivers took up the distress calls from Cocos. He learned that the enemy warship had sent a boat ashore—and then came interruptions in the signals which showed that the wireless station had been raided. Naval officers do not get excited—they have too much of urgency upon which to concentrate their minds—but to those in the *Sydney* must have come some thrills at the unknown prospect. Their ship and their men were new and untried in war. Their guns had never fired a shot except in practice. Before them might be the *Emden* or the *Königsberg* or both together. They did not know, but as they rushed through the slowly heaving tropic sea they serenely, exactly, prepared for action.

The light cruiser *Sydney*, completed in 1913 for the Australian Unit, is very fast and powerful. She is of 5600 tons, built with the clipper bows and lines of a yacht, and when oil is sprayed upon her coal furnaces can steam at over twenty-five knots. She bears upon her deck eight six-inch guns of the latest pattern, one forward, one aft, and three on either beam, so that she can fire simultaneously from five guns upon either broadside. Her lyddite shells weigh one hundred pounds each. She was, and is, of the fast one-calibre type of warship which, whether as light cruiser, battle-cruiser, or heavy battleship, gives to our Navy its modern power of manœuvre and concentrated fighting force. Speed and gun-power, with the simplicity of control given by guns all of one size, are the doctrines upon which the New Navy has been built, and by virtue of which it holds the seas. The *Sydney* was far more powerful than the *Emden*, whose ten guns were of 4.1 inches firing shells of thirty-eight pounds weight. The German raider had been out of dock in warm waters for at least three and a half months, her bottom was foul, and her speed so much reduced that in the action which presently began

she never raised more than sixteen knots. In speed as in gun-power she was utterly outclassed.

Let us visit the *Sydney* as she prepares for action on the morning of the fight just as she had prepared day after day in practice drill at sea. Before the foremast stands the armoured conning tower—exactly like a closed-in jam-pot—designed for the captain's use; forward of the tower rises the two-storeyed bridge, the upper part of which is the station of the gunnery control officer; upon the mast, some fifty feet up, is fitted a spotting top for another officer. This distribution of executive control may look very pretty and scientific, but Glossop, who had tested it in practice, proposed to fight on a system of his own. If a captain is cooped up in a conning tower, with the restricted vision of a mediæval knight through a vizard, a gunnery lieutenant is perched on the upper bridge by the big range-finder, and another lieutenant is aloft in the spotting top, the difficulties of communication in a small cruiser are added to the inevitable confusion of a fight. So the armoured jam-pot and the crow's nest aloft were both abandoned, and Glossop placed himself beside his Gunnery Lieutenant Rahilly upon the upper bridge with nothing between their bodies and the enemy's shot except a frail canvas screen. Accompanying them was a lieutenant in charge of certain instruments. At the back of the bridge—which measured some ten feet by eight—stood upon its pedestal the principal range-finder with a seat at the back for the operator. This concentration of control upon the exposed upper bridge had its risks, as will presently appear, but it made for simplicity and for the rapid working both of the ship and of her guns. Another lieutenant, Geoffrey Hampden, was in charge of the after control station, where also was fitted a range-finder. When a ship prepares for action the most unhappy person on board is the Second in Command—in this instance Lieutenant-Commander John F. Finlayson (now Commander)—who by the rules of the Service is condemned to safe and inglorious, though important, duties in the lower conning tower. Here, seeing little or nothing and wrapped like some precious egg in cotton wool, the poor First Lieut. is preserved from danger so that, if his Chief is killed or disabled, he at least may remain to take over command.

From the upper fore bridge of the *Sydney* we can see the guns' crews standing ready behind their curved steel screens and note that as the ship cuts through the long ocean swell the waves break every now and then over the fo'c'sle and drench the gun which stands



there. At 9.15 land is sighted some ten miles distant and five minutes later a three-funnelled cruiser, recognised at once as the *Emden*, is seen running out of the port. Upon the *Sydney* a bugle blows, and then for twenty minutes all is quiet orderly work at Action Quarters. To the *Emden* the sudden appearance of the *Sydney* is a complete surprise. Her destruction party of three officers and forty men are still ashore and must be left behind if their ship is to be given any, the most slender, chance of escape. Captain von Müller recognises the *Sydney* at once as a much faster and more heavily gunned ship than his own. His one chance is to rush at his unexpected opponent and utilise to the utmost the skill of his highly trained gunners and the speed with which they can work their quick-firing guns. If he can overwhelm the *Sydney* with a torrent of shell before she can get seriously home upon him he may disable her so that flight will still be possible. He can hope for nothing from torpedoes, for, though he has three left, his torpedo flat is out of action. In rapid and good gunnery, and in a quick bold offensive, may rest safety; there is no other chance. So out he comes, makes straight for the *Sydney* as hard as he can go and gives her as lively a fifteen minutes as the most greedy of fire-eaters could desire.

When the two cruisers first see one another they are 20,000 yards distant, but as both are closing in the range comes quickly down to 10,500 yards (six land miles). To the astonishment both of the Captain and Gunnery Lieutenant of the *Sydney*, who are together looking out from the upper fore bridge, von Müller opens fire at this very long range for his small 4.1-inch guns and gets within a hundred yards at his first salvo. It is wonderful shooting. His next is just over and with the third he begins to hit. At the long range the *Emden's* shells fall steeply—at an angle of thirty degrees—rarely burst and never ricochet from the sea. They whine overhead in torrents, plop into the sea on all sides, and now and then smash on board. One reaches the upper fore bridge, passes within a foot of Lieutenant Rahilly's head, strikes the pedestal of the big range-finder, glances off without bursting, cuts off the leg of the operator who is sitting behind, and finishes its career overboard. If that shell had burst Glossop and his Gunnery Lieutenant, together with their colleague at the rate-of-change instrument, must have been killed or seriously wounded and the Second in Command would have been released from his thick steel prison. Not one of them was six feet distant from where the shell struck in their midst. The



range-finder is wrecked and its operator killed, but the others are untouched. A few minutes later two, possibly three, shells hit the after-control, wound everyone inside, and wipe that control off the effective list.

But meanwhile the officers of the *Sydney* and their untried but gallant and steady men have not been idle. Their first salvo fired immediately after the *Emden* opened is much too far, their second is rather wild and ragged, but with the third some hits are made. The *Sydney* had fortunately just secured her range when the principal range finder was wrecked and the after control scattered, and Gunnery Lieutenant Rahilly is able to keep it by careful spotting and rate of change observations. Glossop, who has the full command given by superior speed, manœuvres so as to keep out to about 8000 yards, to maintain as nearly constant a rate of change as is possible, and to present the smallest danger space to the enemy. The *Emden's* first effort to close in has failed, and now that the *Sydney's* hundred-pound shells begin to burst well on board of her the *Emden's* one chance upon which von Müller had staked everything has disappeared. During the first fifteen minutes the *Sydney* was hit ten times, but afterwards not at all; the *Emden* was hit again and again during the long-drawn-out two hours of her hopeless struggle. After twenty minutes the *Emden's* forward funnel went and she caught fire aft. Her steering gear was wrecked and she became dependent upon the manipulation of her propellers, with the inevitable falling off in speed to about thirteen knots. During the early critical minutes of the action the *Sydney* had the *Emden* upon her port side, but all her casualties were suffered upon the starboard or disengaged side due to the steepness with which the German shells were falling. Once she was hit upon the two-inch side armour over the engine room and the shell, which this time burst, left a barely discernible scratch. Another shell fell at the foot of a starboard gun pedestal in the open space behind the shield, burst and wounded the gun's crew but left the gun unhurt except for a spattering of a hundred tiny dents. The electric wires were not even cut. It is remarkable that during the whole of the action no electric wires in any part of the *Sydney* were damaged. As I have told, both gun controls of the *Sydney* were hit during the first few minutes though only the after one was put out of action; the *Emden*, less fortunate, had both her controls totally destroyed and all the officers and men within them killed.

After the lapse of about three-quarters of an hour the *Emden* had lost two funnels and the foremast; she was badly on fire aft

and amidships, so that at times nothing more than the top of the mainmast could be seen amid the clouds of steam and smoke. Her guns, now occasionally firing, gave out a short yellow flash by which they could be distinguished from the long dark red flames of the *Sydney's* bursting lyddite. Once she disappeared so completely that the cry went up from the *Sydney* that she had sunk, but she appeared again, blazing, almost helpless. Glossop, who had been circling round to port, then drew in to a range of 5500 yards—which in the absence of the range-finder was wrongly estimated at under 5000—and determined to try a shot with a torpedo. It was a difficult shot as the torpedo gunner was obliged to set his gyroscope to a definite angle and then wait until the rapidly turning *Emden* came upon his bearing. But in spite of the difficulties it was very good; the torpedo ran straight for its mark and then stopped short at the distance of 5000 yards for which it had been set. The torpedo crews, naturally enough, wanted forthwith to let off all their mouldies, just to show the gunners how the business should be done with, but the hard-hearted Glossop forbade. The moment after the one had been fired he swung the ship round to starboard, opened out his range, and resumed the distressful game of gun-pounding. The *Emden* also went away to starboard for about four miles and then von Müller, finding that his ship was badly pierced under water as well as on fire, put about again and headed for the North Keeling Island, where he ran aground. The *Sydney* followed, saw that her beaten enemy was irretrievably wrecked, and went away to deal with the *Emden's* collier—a captured British ship *Buresk*—which had hovered about during the action but upon which Glossop had not troubled to fire.

Though the *Emden* was beaten and done for, the gallantry and skill with which she had fought could not have been exceeded. She was caught by surprise, and to some extent unprepared—for her torpedo flat could not be cleared—yet within twenty minutes of the *Sydney's* appearance upon the sky line von Müller was pouring a continuous rain of shell upon her at over 10,000 yards range and maintaining both his speed of fire and its accuracy until the hundred-pound shots bursting on board of him had smashed up both his controls, knocked down his foremast, and put nine of his ten guns out of action. Even then the one remaining gun continued to fire up to the last. The crew of the *Sydney*, exposed though many of them were upon the vessel's open decks—a light cruiser has none of the protection of a battleship—bore themselves as their Anzac fellow-countrymen upon the beaches and hills of Gallipoli. At first

they were rather ragged through over-eagerness, but they speedily settled down. The hail of shell which beat upon them was unceasing, but they paid as little heed to it as if they had passed their lives under heavy fire instead of experiencing it for the first time. Upon Glossop and his lieutenants on the upper bridge, and in the transmission room below, was suddenly thrown a new and urgent problem. With the principal range-finder gone and the after-control wrecked in the first few minutes, they were forced to depend upon skilful manœuvring and spotting to give accuracy to their guns. They solved their problem ambulando, as the Navy always does, and showed that they could smash up an opponent by mother wit and sea skill when robbed of the aids of science. It is good to be equipped with all the appliances which modern ingenuity has devised ; it is still better to be able at need to dispense with them.

I love to write of the cold fierce energy with which our wonderful centuries-old Navy goes forth to battle, but I love still more to record its kindly solicitude for the worthy opponents whom its energy has smashed up. Once a fight is over it loves to bind up the wounds of its foes, to drink their health in a friendly bottle, and to wish them better luck next time. When he had settled with the collier *Buresk*, and taken off all those on board of her, Glossop returned to the wreck of the *Emden* lying there helpless upon the North Keeling Island. The foremast and funnels were gone, the brave ship was a tangle of broken steel fore and aft, but the mainmast still stood and upon it floated the naval ensign of Germany. Until that flag had been struck the *Sydney* could not send in a boat or deal with the crew as surrendered prisoners. Captain Glossop is the kindest of men, it went against all his instincts to fire at that wreck upon which the forms of survivors could be seen moving about, but his duty compelled him to force von Müller into submission. For a quarter of an hour he sent messages by International code and Morse flag signals, but the German ensign remained floating aloft. As von Müller would not surrender he must be compelled, and compelled quickly and thoroughly. In order to make sure work the *Sydney* approached to within 4000 yards, trained four guns upon the *Emden*, and then when the aim was steady and certain smashed her from end to end. The destruction must have been frightful, and it is probable that von Müller's obstinacy cost his crew greater casualties than the whole previous action. These last four shots did their work, the ensign came down, and a white flag of surrender went up. It was now late in the afternoon, the tropical night was approaching, and the *Sydney* left the *Emden*

to steam to Direction Island some fifteen miles away and to carry succour to the staff of the raided cable and wireless station. Before leaving he sent in a boat and an assurance that he would bring help in the morning.

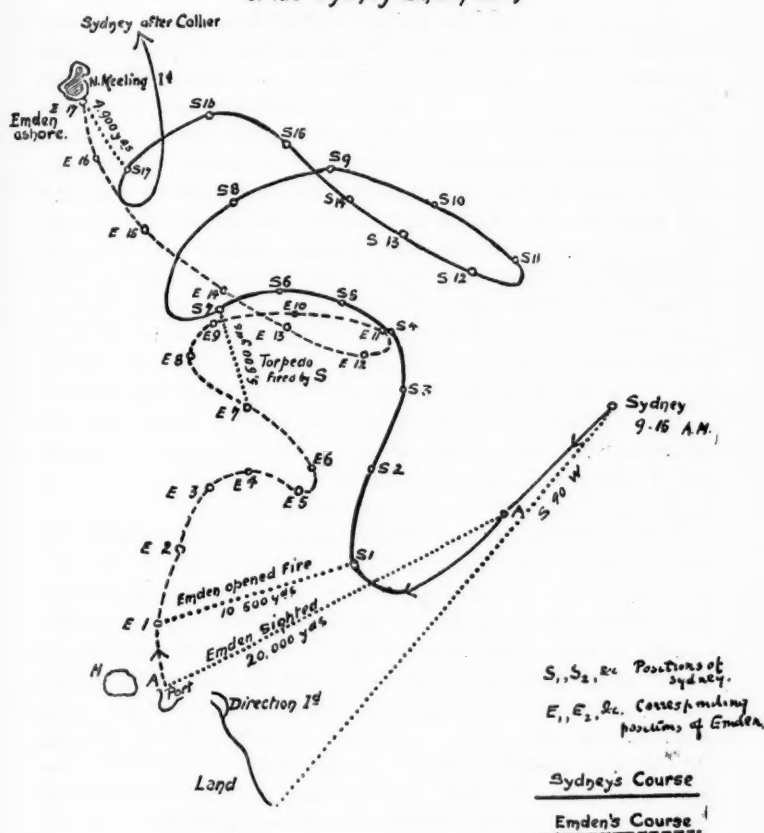
Although the distance from Direction Island, where the action may be said to have begun, to North Keeling Island, where it ended, is only fifteen miles the courses followed by the fighting vessels were very much longer. They are shown upon the Glossop-von Müller plan, printed over page. The *Emden* was upon the inside and the *Sydney*—whose greatly superior speed gave her complete mastery of manœuvre—was upon the outside. The *Emden's* course works out at approximately thirty-five miles and the *Sydney's* at fifty miles. The officers and men who are fighting a ship stand, as it were, in the midst of a brilliantly lighted stage and may receive more than their due in applause if one overlooks the sweating engineers, artificers, and stokers who, hidden far below, make possible the exploits of the stars. At no moment during the whole action, though ventilating fans might stop and minor pipes be cut, did the engines fail to give Glossop the speed for which he asked. His success and his very slight losses—four men killed and sixteen wounded—sprang entirely from his speed, which, when required, exceeded the twenty-five knots for which his engines were designed. When therefore we think of Glossop and Rahilly, who from that exposed upper bridge were manœuvring the ship and directing the guns, we must not forget Engineer Lieutenant-Commander Coleman and his half-naked men down below, who throughout that broiling day in the tropics nursed those engines and toiled at those fires which brought the guns to fire upon the enemy.

True to his promise Glossop brought the *Sydney* back to the *Emden* at eleven o'clock on the morning of November 10, having borrowed a doctor and two assistants from Direction Island, and then began the long task—which the Navy loves only less than actual battle—of rescue and care for the sufferers by its prowess. North Keeling Island is an irregular strip of rock, boulders and sand almost entirely surrounding a large lagoon. It is studded with cocoanut palms and infested with red land-crabs. An unattractive spot. The *Emden* was aground upon the weather side and the long rollers running past her stern broke into surf before the mainmast. Lieutenant R. C. Garsia, going out to her in one of the *Sydney's* boats, was hauled by the Germans upon her quarter-deck, where he found Captain von Müller, whose personal luck had held to the last, for he was unwounded. Von Müller readily gave his

parole to be amenable to the *Sydney's* discipline if the surviving Germans were transhipped. The *Emden* was in a frightful state. She was burned out aft, her decks were piled with the wreck of three funnels and the foremast, and within her small space of 3500 tons, seven officers and 115 men had been killed by high-explosive shell and splinters. Her condition may be suggested by the experience of a warrant officer of the *Sydney* who, after gravely soaking in her horrors, retailed them in detail to his messmates. For two days thereafter the warrant officers' mess in the *Sydney* lost their appetites for meat: one need say no more! The unwounded and slightly wounded men were first transferred to the boats of the *Sydney* and *Buresk*, but for the seriously wounded Neil-Robertson stretchers had to be used so that they might be lowered over the side into boats. This had to be done during the brief lulls between the rollers. By five o'clock the *Emden* was cleared of men and Captain von Müller went on board the *Sydney*, which made at once for the only possible landing place on the island in order to take off some Germans who had got ashore. To the surprise of everyone it was then discovered that several wounded men, including a doctor, had managed to reach the shore and were somewhere among the scrub and rocks. Night was fast coming on, the wounded ashore were without food or drink—except what could be obtained from cocoanuts—and were cut off from all assistance except that which the *Sydney* could supply. The story of how young Lieutenant Garsia drove in through the surf after dark—at the imminent hazard of his whaler and her crew—hunted for hours after those elusive Germans, was more than once hopelessly 'bushed,' and finally came out at the original landing place, is a pretty example of the Navy's readiness to spend ease and risk life for the benefit of its defeated enemies. In the morning the rescue party of English sailors and unwounded Germans, supplied with cocoanuts and an improvised stretcher made of bottom boards and boathooks, at last discovered the wounded party, which had not left the narrow neck of land opposite the stranded *Emden*. Lieutenant Schal of the *Emden*, who was with them, eagerly seized upon the cocoanuts and cut them open for the wounded, who had been crying for water all night and for whom he had not been able to find more than one nut. The wounded German doctor had gone mad the previous afternoon, insisted upon drinking deeply of salt water, and so died. The four wounded men who remained alive were laboriously transferred to the *Sydney* and the dead were covered up with sand

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The Glossop-von Müller plan  
of the Sydney-Emden action.



Scale 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 miles

and boulders. 'A species of red land-crab with which the ground is infested made this the least one could do.' The reports of Navy men may seem to lack grace, but they have the supreme merit of vivid simplicity. That short sentence, which I have quoted, makes us realise that waterless crab-haunted night of German suffering more vividly than a column of fine writing.

All was over, and the packed *Sydney* headed away for her 1600-mile voyage to Colombo. To her company of about 400 she had added 11 German officers and 200 men, of whom 3 officers and 53 men were wounded. The worst cases were laid upon her fo'c'sle and quarter-deck, the rest huddled in where they could. It was a trying voyage, but happily the weather was fine and windless, the ship as steady as is possible in the Indian Ocean, and the Germans well behaved. Von Müller and Glossop, the conquered and conqueror, the guest and the host, became friendly and mutually self-respecting during those days in the *Sydney*. I like to think of those two, in the captain's cabin, putting their heads together over sheets of paper and at last evolving the plan of the *Sydney-Emden* action which is printed here. Von Müller did the greater part of it, for, as Glossop remarked, 'he had the most leisure.' A cruiser skipper with 400 of his own men on board and 200 prisoners, is not likely to lack for jobs. To the von Müller-Glossop plan I have added a few explanatory words, but otherwise it is as finally approved by those who knew most about it.

Some single-ship actions remain more persistently in the public memory and in the history books than battles of far greater consequence. They are easy to describe and easy to understand. One immortal action is that of the *Shannon* and the *Chesapeake*; another is that of the *Sydney* and the *Emden*. It was planned wholly by the Fates which rule the Luck of the Navy, it was fought cleanly and fairly and skilfully on both sides, and the faster, more powerful ship won. I like to picture to myself the *Sydney* heading for Colombo, bearing upon her crowded decks the captives of her bow and spear, her guns and her engines, not vaingloriously triumphant but humbly thankful to the God of Battles. To her officers and crew their late opponents were now guests who could discuss with them, the one with the other, the incidents of the short fierce fight dispassionately as members of the same profession, though serving under different flags, just as Glossop and von Müller discussed them in the after cabin under the quarter-deck when they bent their heads over their collaborated plan.



# SUNSET AT SEA.

Down goes the sun.  
 The distant hills resign their transient rose.  
 Along the fading loch the shadows close.  
     Another night's begun.  
     The bugle sings :  
 ' Sailormen, sailormen, rest till to-morrow, to-morrow.'  
 ' To-morrow, to-morrow brings gladness or sorrow, or sorrow.'  
     ' What matter what it brings ?'  
     The ship's bell tolls.  
 Pale through the dusk as spray the sea-gulls sweeping  
 Hail the last notes with laughter and with weeping ;  
     They are drowned sailors' souls.  
     Now, colours down !  
 While we, their servants, to salute their falling  
 Pause for a moment at the pipe's shrill calling,  
     That sends our greeting, blown  
     By night winds home.  
  
 England, can you not faintly hear our greeting ?  
 Can you not feel our hearts with your heart beating  
     When we, your sailors, come  
     At the sun's setting  
 To this short rite of reverence, and send  
 Our thoughts to landward at the long day's end ?  
     One moment now forgetting  
     The round of toil,  
 We strain to see the vision of your beauty,  
 To hear the reasonable voice of duty  
     Asking: is fame the spoil ?  
     Is hate the spur ?  
 A smile for fame ! The masters of the sea  
 Need no such profit in their mastery.  
     Let fame young nations stir  
     With no sea-story.  
 It is enough for us to wear the crown

Our fathers won, and hand the laurels down  
Unfaded in their glory.

A smile for hate !

You could not hate the blackest fiend from hell  
Once you had launched at him a lyddite shell.

To what, then, dedicate

Our service true ?

O island refuge of our homing hearts !

Across the cold and sundering sea that parts

Your children still from you,

That coast-line lonely

Of shadowy fields and mountains far away,

That is our inspiration and our stay.

Your peace and welfare only

Are all our care.

Empires and states and high disputes of kings,

Treaties and laws, these are hard, landmen's things.

Enough for us our share

In simpler ends :

A strong devotion to each kindly face

Beyond those cliffs ; faith to our native place,

Whose intimacy lends

Our brightest memories—

The green recesses of the hawthorn hedge ;

The fairy trill of warblers in the sedge ;

Elms, where the brown owl cries

Of evenings ;

Each dear, familiar turning in the town ;

The solemn bastion of the sun-bleached down,

Gemmed with small azure wings ;

Glades, cool to see,

Where Love, with his shy followers of the wild,

Waylays the wayfarer, the woodland child,

And keeps him company.

O very breath

Of life, our England ! all we have, we give

For gifts of thine that made it good to live—

Your guardians to the death.

E. HILTON YOUNG.

## *THE PASSING OF A ZEPPELIN.*

BY LEWIS R. FREEMAN.

IN the year that had gone by since the first great air-raid on London we knew that much had been done in the way of strengthening the defences. Just what had been done we did not, of course, and do not, know. We knew that there were more and better guns and searchlights, and probably greatly improved means of anticipating the coming of the raiders and of following and reporting their movements after they did come. At the same time we also knew that the latest Zeppelin had been greatly improved; that it was larger, faster, capable of ascending to a greater altitude, and probably able to stand more and heavier gun-fire than its prototype of a year ago. It seemed to be a question, therefore, of whether or not the guns could range the raiders, and, if so, do them any vital damage when they did hit them. The aeroplane was an unknown quantity, and, in the popular mind at least, not seriously reckoned with. London knew that the crucial test would not come until an airship tried again to penetrate to the heart of the metropolitan area, and awaited the result calmly if not quite indifferently.

The Zeppelin raids of the spring and early summer, numerous as they had been, had done a negligible amount of military damage and scarcely more to civil property. The death list, too, had, mercifully, been very low. It seemed significant, however, that the main London defences had been avoided during all of this time, indicating, apparently, that the raiders were reluctant to lift the lid of the Pandora's box that was laid out so temptingly before them for fear of the possible consequences. Twice or thrice, watching with my glasses after I had been awakened by distant bomb explosions or gun-fire, I had seen a shell-pocketed airship draw back, as a yellow dog refuses the challenge that his intrusion has provoked, and glide off into the darkness of some safer area. 'Would they try it again?' was the question Londoners asked themselves as the dark of the moon came round each month, and, except for the comparatively few who had had personal experience of the terror and death that follow the swath of an air-raider,

most of them seemed rather anxious to have the matter put to the test.

Last night—just twelve ‘darks-of-the-moon’ after the first great raid of 1915—the test came. It was hardly a conclusive one, perhaps (though that may well have come before these lines find their way into print), but it was certainly highly illuminative. I write this on my return to London from viewing—twenty miles away—a tangled mass of wreckage and a heap of charred trunks that are all that remain of a Zeppelin and its crew which—whether by accident, intent, or the force of circumstances will probably never be known—rushed in where two others of its aerial sisters feared to fly, and paid the cost.

There was nothing of the surprise (to London, at least; as regards the ill-starred Zeppelin crew none can say) in last night’s raid. The night grew more heavily overcast as the darkness deepened, and towards midnight stealthy little beams of hooded searchlights pirouetting on the eastern clouds told the home-wending Saturday night theatre crowd that, with the imminent approach of the raiders, London was lifting a corner of its mask of blackness and throwing out an open challenge to the enemy. This was the first time I had known the lights to precede the actual explosion of bombs, and the cool confidence of the thing suggested (as I heard one policeman tell another) that the defence had something ‘up their sleeves.’

It was towards one in the morning when I finished my supper at a West End restaurant and started walking through the almost deserted streets to my hotel. London is anything but a bedlam after midnight, but the silence in the early hours of this morning was positively uncanny. Now, with the last of the ‘buses gone and all trains stopped, only the muffled buzz of an occasional belated taxi—pushing on cautiously with hooded lights—broke the stillness.

Reaching my room, I pulled on a sweater, ran up the curtain, laid my glass ready and seated myself at the window, the same window from which, a year ago, I had watched those two insolently contemptuous raiders sail across overhead and leave a blazing wake of death and destruction behind them. On that night, I reflected, I had felt the rush of air from the bombs, and—later—had watched the firemen extinguishing the flames and the ambulances carrying the wounded to the hospitals. Would it be like that to-night? I wondered (there was now no doubt that the

raiders were near, for the searchlights had multiplied and, far to the south-east, though no detonations were audible, quick flashes told of scattering gun-fire), or would the defence have more of a word to say for itself this time? I looked to the eastern heavens, where the shifting clouds were now 'polka-dotted' with the fluttering golden motes of a score of searchlights, and thought I had found my answer.

There was no wheeling and reeling of the lights in wide circles, as a year ago, but rather a steady, persistent stabbing at the clouds, each one appearing to keep to an allotted area of its own. 'Stabbing' expresses the action exactly, and it recalled to me an occasion, a month ago, when a 'Tommy' who was showing me through some captured dug-outs on the Somme illustrated, with bayonet thrusts, the manner in which they had originally searched for Germans hiding under the straw mattresses. There was nothing 'panicky' in the work of the lights this time, but only the suggestion of methodical, ordered, relentless vigilance.

'Encouraging as a preliminary,' I said to myself; 'now' (for the night was electric with import) 'for the main event.'

There was not long to wait. To the south-east the gun-flashes had increased in frequency, followed by mist-dulled blurs of brightness in the clouds that told of bursting shells. Suddenly, through a rift in the clouds, I saw a new kind of glare—the earthward-launched beam of an airship's searchlight groping for its target—but the shifting mist-curtain intervened again even as one of the defending lights took up the challenge and flashed its own rapier ray in quick reply. Presently the muffled boom of bombs fled to my ears, and then the sharper rattle of a sudden gust of gun-fire. This was quickly followed by a confused roar of sound, evidently from many bombs dropped simultaneously or in quick succession, and I knew that one of two things had happened—either the raider had found its mark and was delivering 'rapid fire,' or the guns were making it so hot for the visitor that it had been compelled to dump its explosives and seek safety in flight. When a minute or more had gone by I felt sure that the latter had been scuttled, and that it was now only a question of which direction the flight was going to take.

Again the eastward searchlights gave me the answer. By two and three—I could not follow the order of the thing—the lights that had been 'patrolling' the eastern sky moved over and took their station around a certain low-hanging cloud to the south. The murky

sheet of cumulo-nimbus seemed to pale and dissolve in the concentrated rays, and then, right into the focus of golden glow formed by the dancing light motes, running wild and blind as a bull charges the red mantle masking the matador, darted a huge Zeppelin.

Perhaps never before in all time has a single object been the centre of so blinding a glare. It seemed that the optic nerve must wither in so fierce a light, and certainly no unprotected eye could have opened to it. Dark glasses might have made it bearable, but could not possibly have resolved the earthward prospect into anything less than the heart of a fiery furnace. Indeed, it is very doubtful if the bewildered fugitive knew, in more than the most general way, where it was. Cut off by the guns to the south-east from retreat in that direction, but knowing that the North Sea and safety could be reached by driving to the north-east, it is more than probable that the harried raider found itself over the 'Lion's Den' rather because it could not help it than by deliberate intent.

What a contrast was this blinded, reeling thing to those arrogantly purposeful raiders of a year ago! Supremely disdainful of gun and searchlight, these had prowled over London till the last of their bombs had been planted, and one of them had even circled back the better to see the ruin its passing had wrought. But *this* raider—far larger than its predecessors and flying at over twice as great a height though it was—dashed on its erratic course as though pursued by the vengeful spirits of those its harpy sisters had bombed to death in their beds. If it still had bombs to drop its commander either had no time or no heart for the job. Never have I seen an inanimate thing typify terror—the terror that must have gripped the hearts of its palpably flustered (to judge by the airship's movements) crew—like that staggering helpless maverick of a Zeppelin, when it finally found itself clutched in the tentacles of the searchlights of the aerial defences of London.

All this time the weird, uncanny silence that brooded over the streets before I had come indoors held the city in its spell. The watching thousands—nay, millions—kept their excitement in leash, and the propeller of the raider—muffled by the mists intervening between the earth and the 12,000 feet at which it whirled—dulled to a drowsy drone. Into this tense silence the sudden fire of a hundred anti-aircraft guns—opening in unison as though at the pull of a single lanyard—cut in a blended roar like the Crack o' Doom; indeed, though few among those hushed watching millions realised it it *was* literally the Crack o' Doom that was sounding. For perhaps

a minute or a minute and a half the air was vibrant with the roar of hard-pumped guns and the shriek of speeding shell, the great sound from below drowning the sharper cracks from the steel-cold flashes in the upper air.

It was guns that were built for the job—not the hastily gathered and wholly inadequate artillery of a year ago—that were speaking now, and the voice was one of ordered, imperious authority. Range-finders had the marauder's altitude, and the information was being put at the disposal of guns that had the power to 'deliver the goods' at that level. What a contrast the sequel was to that pitiful firing of the other raid! Only the opening shots were 'shorts' or 'wides' now, and ten seconds after the first gun a diamond-clear burst blinking out through a rift in the upper clouds told that the raider—to use a naval term—was 'straddled,' had shells exploding both above and below it. From that instant till the guns ceased to roar, seventy or eighty seconds later, the shells burst, lacing the air with golden glimmers, and meshed the flying raider in a fiery net.

For a few seconds it seemed to me that, close-woven as was the net of shell-bursts, the flashes came hardly as fast as the roar of the guns would seem to warrant, and I swept the heavens with my glasses in a search for other possible targets. But no other raider was in sight; there was no other 'nodal centre' of gun-fire and searchlights. Suddenly the reason for the apparent discrepancy was clear to me. The flashes I saw (except for a few of the shrapnel bullets they were releasing) were only the misses; the hits I could not see. The long-awaited test was at its crucial stage. Empty of bombs and with half of its fuel consumed, the raider was at the zenith of its flight, and yet the guns were ranging it with ease. It was now a question of how much shell-fire the Zeppelin could stand.

In spite of the fact that the airship—so far as I could see through my glasses—did not appear to slow down or to be perceptibly racked by the gun-fire, I have no doubt what the end would have been if the test could have been pressed to its conclusion in an open country. But bringing a burning Zeppelin down across three or four blocks of thickly settled London was hardly a thing the Air Defence desired to do if it could possibly be avoided. The plan was carried to its conclusion with the almost mathematical precision that marked the preliminary searchlight work and gunnery.



From the moment that it had burst into sight the raider had been emitting clouds of white gas to hide itself from the searchlights and guns, while the plainly visible movements of its lateral planes seemed to indicate that it was making desperate efforts to climb still higher into the thinning upper air. Neither expedient was of much use. The swirling gas clouds might well have obscured a hovering airship, but never one that was rushing through the air at seventy miles an hour, while, far from increasing its altitude, there seemed to be a slight but steady loss from the moment the guns ceased until, two or three miles further along, it was hidden from sight for a minute by a low-hanging cloud. Undoubtedly the aim of the gunners had been to 'hole,' not to fire the marauder, and it must have been losing gas very rapidly even—as the climacteric moment of the attack approached—at the time increased buoyancy was most desirable.

The 'massed' searchlights of London 'let go' shortly after the gun-fire ceased, and now, as the raider came within their field, the more scattered lights of the northern suburbs wheeled up and 'fastened on.' The fugitive changed its course from north to north-easterly about this time, and the swelling clouds of vapour left behind presently cut off its foreshortened length entirely from my view. A heavy ground mist appeared to prevail beyond the heights to the north, and in the diffused glow of the searchlights that strove to pierce this mask my glasses showed the ghostly shadows of fitting aeroplanes—manœuvring for the death-thrust.

The ground mist (which did not, however, cover London proper) kept the full strength of the searchlights from the upper air, and it was in a sky of almost Stygian blackness that the final blow was sent home. The farmers of Hertfordshire tell weird stories of the detonations of bursting bombs striking their fields, but all these sounds were absorbed in the twenty-mile air-cushion that was now interposed between my vantage point and the final scene of action.

Not a sound, not a shadow heralded the flare of yellow light which suddenly flashed out in the north-eastern heavens and spread latitudinally until the whole body of a Zeppelin—no small object even at twenty miles—stood out in glowing incandescence. Then a great sheet of pink-white flame shot up, and in the ripples of rosy light which suffused the earth for scores of miles I could read the gilded lettering on my binoculars. This was undoubtedly the explosion of the ignited hydrogen of the main gas-bags, and

immediately following it the great frame collapsed in the middle and began falling slowly toward the earth, burning now with a bright yellow flame, above which the curl of black smoke was distinctly visible. A lurid burst of light—doubtless from the exploding petrol tanks—flared up as the flaming mass struck the earth, and half a minute later the night, save for the questing searchlights to east and south, was as black as ever again.

Then perhaps the strangest thing of all occurred. London began to cheer. I should have been prepared for it in Paris, or Rome, or Berlin, or even New York, but that the Briton—who of all men in the world most fears the sound of his own voice lifted in unrestrained jubilation—was really cheering, and in millions, was almost too much. I pinched my arm to be sure that I had not dozed away, and, lost in wonder, forgot for a minute or two the great drama just enacted.

Under my window half a dozen Australian 'Tommies' were rending the air with 'coo-ees' and dancing around a lamp-post, while all along the street, from doorways and windows, exultant shouting could be heard. For several blocks in all directions the cheers rang out loud and clear, distinctly recognisable as such; the sound of the millions of throats farther afield came only as a heavy rumbling hum. Perhaps since the dawn of creation the air has not trembled with so strange a sound—a sound which, though entirely human in its origin, was still unhuman, unearthly, fantastic. Certainly never before in history—not even during the great volcanic eruptions—has so huge a number of people (the fall of the Zeppelin had been visible through a fifty- to seventy-five-mile radius in all directions, a region with probably from 10,000,000 to 15,000,000 inhabitants) been suddenly and intensely stirred by a single event.

It was undoubtedly the spectacularity of the unexpected *coup* that had made these normally repressed millions so suddenly and so violently vocal. Many—perhaps most—stopped cheering when they had had time to realise that a score of human beings were being burned to cinders in the heart of that flaming comet in the north-eastern heavens; others—I knew the only recently restored tenements where some of them were—must have shouted in all the grimmer exultation for that very realisation. I can hardly say yet which stirred me more deeply, the fall of the Zeppelin itself or that stupendous burst of feeling aroused by its fall.

but mostly on foot, I threaded highway and byway for the next four hours, and shortly after daybreak scrambled through the last of a dozen thorny hedgerows and found myself beside the still smouldering wreckage of the fallen raider. An orderly cordon of soldiers surrounding an acre of blackened and twisted metal, miles and miles of tangled wire, and a score or so of Flying Corps men already busily engaged loading the wreckage into waiting motor-lorries—that was about all there was to see. A ten-foot-square green tarpaulin covered all that could be gathered together of the airship's crew. Some of the fragments were readily recognisable as having once been the arms and legs and trunks of men; others were not. A man at my elbow stood gazing at the pitiful heap for a space, his brow puckered in thought. Presently he turned to me, a grim light in his eye, and spoke.

'Do you know,' he said, 'that these' (indicating the charred stumps under the square of canvas) 'have just recalled to me the words Count Zeppelin is reported to have used at a great mass meeting called in Berlin to press for a more rigorous prosecution of the war against England by air, for a further increase of frightfulness? Leading two airship pilots to the front of the platform, he shouted to the crowd, "Here are two men who were over London last night!" And the assembled thousands, so the dispatch said, roared their applause and clamoured that the Zeppelins be sent again and again until the arrogant Englanders were brought to their knees. Well'—he paused and drew a deep breath as his eyes returned to the heap of blackened fragments—'it appears that they *did* send the Zeppelins again—more than ever were sent before—and now it is *our* turn to be presented to "the men who were over London last night." I wonder if the flare that consumed these poor devils was bright enough to pierce the black night that has settled over Germany?'

. . . . .

The tenseness passed out of the night, and—the raid was over. Who knows but what, so far as the threat to England is concerned, the passing of a Zeppelin marked also the passing of the Zeppelin?

### 'THE WHITE HART.'

IN the early days of the nineteenth century, when many men were afraid that 'old Boney' would invade these islands (and some men were afraid that he would not), in a single hour the 'White Hart' inn, at Marlingford, in the County of Suffolk, lost and gained a mistress—Mrs. Ward, the comfortable innkeeper's young wife, dying, in her first confinement, of ignorance and the 'pothecary, and her little daughter triumphing over both those drawbacks.

Then, as now, Marlingford had a single, long, winding street, with highly respectable, old-fashioned shops, where one bought, not what one wanted, but what they had; with the 'White Hart,' ample, important, well-to-do, with Corinthian pillars to its porch, and fat bow windows much the shape of Mr. Ward's ever-increasing waistcoat; with two lesser inns; behind one of them an active market; standing a little above the town, a manor with its park, and beyond it a church and rectory, damply embosomed in trees.

That Marlingford was considerably less stagnant then than it has ever been since, until once again war has stirred the waters of the pool, is incontrovertible; for expresses tearing through one's station to Yarmouth and Norwich, with only the dullest and slowest of trains stopping thereat, do not make for half so much excitement as the mail-coaches clattering into the town, covered in laurels, and 'distributing, . . . like the opening of the apocalyptic vials, the heart-shaking news of Trafalgar, of Salamanca, of Vittoria.'

Mr. Ward—in the dire and dreadful mourning in which people then encased themselves, and with those lines which the great sorrow, as distinguished from the sorrows, of life carves indelible on a man's face—would stand in his porch when the coach drew up with the steaming horses and old John-coachman calling the curt résumé of the news from his box, and presently retail it to the crowded bar in a form of words generally impressively beginning 'Gentlemen, it is my privilege to inform you,' and sometimes, 'Gentlemen, it is my misfortune.'

Often, of an evening—for in those stirring days it was dull work at the Manor, sitting opposite my Lady, with the vast cap of fashion on her head and, for that was also the fashion among pretty women, not two ideas inside it—Squire Hewlett came

down to the 'White Hart' and carved at the long table for John Ward's guests—another squire, *en voyage*, a solicitor on business, Mr. Williams the 'pothecary, and, rarely, Mr. Codrington the Marlingford parson, a delicate little gentleman, quite the lady. After dinner, John Ward, who had been in and out of the room himself, bearing the steaming joint and the fat couple of chickens, having been bidden to produce his best bottle of port, took a glass of it with the 'real ruler of the English village'—a perfectly good-natured despot in this case—and they discussed Corunna or Badajoz, and advanced amazing theories, always immediately falsified, as to what Boney would do next.

Now and again, when the Squire was giving the company the news from the news-sheet, Ward would catch, or think he caught, a sound in the room above; and at the first full stop, muttering an excuse, left the company, creaked on tiptoe up the broad stairway, into the nursery where, hermetically sealed from all fresh air, little Bella Ward waxed fat and kicked on a régime in every respect absolutely opposed to that on which the young now do precisely the same.

She was a stout, black-eyed baby with red cheeks—not beautiful. What was beautiful, and absurd, was the way, by the time she was two or three years old, she would push away Jane the nurse with her fat, creased arm and toddle to her father, crowing with glee; and his deep delight in her, when he sat her on his roomy knee, clasping her firmly round her large, uncertain waist, and entertained her by the hour together with his great silver repeater.

At six or seven, she was mothering her dolls most capably; and by the time she was twelve—still rather a stout child, thick about the ankles, with a handsome face, fine eyes, plenty of jet-black hair, and a character strongly affectionate and good tempered—she was mothering him.

By the time Napoleon landed at Fréjus from Elba, in 1815, Bella had become 'Miss Bella' to the 'White Hart' and Marlingford in general, and had quite made up for the deficiencies of the polite education she had received from a decayed lady, who had never been one, by plenty of sound natural sense, and no mean portion of the cleverness which, in women particularly, will be found not only to be independent of learning, but apt to be injured by it.

When of an evening a friend came into the cosy parlour behind the bar, Bella, who loved the sound of her own voice, having curbed

it out of respect for her elders for nearly three minutes, said she thought they (meaning the Continental powers in general) must have been a pretty set of ninnies to have supposed old Boney would have stayed quietly in Elba ; the friend (he was Mr. Cole, the Marlingford solicitor) said he considered Miss Bella had put the case very neatly ; and Miss Bella's father was prouder of her than ever.

She made him tea presently, sweet and strong to his taste, and put the cup just where he liked it. Hardly any young people sympathise with old sorrows, because to them sorrows are necessarily new and poignant or not at all ; but Bella had divined that, to her father, her mother's loss was like the loss of a limb—always conscious and present ; so, with only a side glance at a great pile of sewing awaiting her, she played to him presently on the spinet, which he had bought for her second-hand at a sale, as a kind of seal and testimony to the politeness of her education.

Perhaps, trained, her voice would have made her living or her fortune as a professional singer. It was so rich and strong, even as quite a young girl, that one felt if she had rashly put forth the slightest effort, it would have lifted the roof of the ' White Hart ' soaring away into space ; and that it was quite fortunate the tinkling ballads, from a heap of untidy music under the spinet, required no effort, and were the only things she knew. Even so, they filled the close little room with strong melody. If, at the end of the song, she came down cheerfully on the wrong chord, neither she nor old Ward ever fussed about trifles. Bella, pleased to have pleased her father, and a little with an accomplishment then reserved for the lady born, said, loud and cheerful, ' There, dad, what the dickens'll become of my sewing ? ' and resumed it, while old Ward got his comfortable person with some difficulty out of his fireside chair and joined his friends and customers in the bar.

She must have been about eighteen—a very fine figure of a girl (the tragic part of being a fine figure at eighteen is that one is certain to be so much too fine a one at eight-and-twenty), with her direct handsome eyes, her bright complexion, and her raven hair—when her old dad, as she always spoke of him, had a slight stroke, and Mr. Williams, who had ushered Miss Bella into the world (and so very nearly out of it again), was once more constantly in the ' White Hart.' After a while, the patient recovered somewhat, remaining, however, fractious and half childish, distressingly

distressed at his own mental failure"; so that it required all Bella's inborn cleverness, as well as all her patience and strong affection, to make him think he still held the reins of government and imperceptibly to guide them herself.

She was scarcely twenty when the whole management of the great house, the stables, the bar, the servants, the difficult catering for commercials (of whom a dozen might come one day and none at all the next), rested entirely on her broad shoulders, as well as the care of the old father—now nearly always in his chair by the fire, looking into it with his sad, bewildered old eyes, and asking her five-and-twenty times in an hour where her mother was.

It would have been odd if the Bella of this period—well-endowed, handsome, buxom, attractive, plainly fitted for nothing if for the leanness and narrowness, the meagre interests and barren joys of the single life—should have lacked suitors.

Many a brisk young commercial must have come Marlingford way, or prosperous farmer turned into the 'White Hart' on a market-day, with the paramount purpose of seeing its young mistress, whose charms, not being those of the lily or the violet but of braver and ampler flowers, commended themselves so much the more.

She was always genial and pleasant; laughed her deep, natural laugh; drew the beer with a handsome head; and replied with a fine toss of her own and a cheerful 'None of your nonsense, if you please, Mr. Phillips!' to compliments which had not the disadvantage of subtlety.

But when Mr. Phillips—a really magnificent young sultan, who, technically, travelled in silk, and, actually, in the smartest and showiest raiment permitted to a young commercial—positively deigned to throw the handkerchief for her to pick up, she did not even, so to speak, look at it: merely remarking, 'I should just like to see myself deserting my old dad!' And when Mr. Phillips—still incredulous that any woman could be so mad as to refuse him—gasped out, 'Why, it's Scriptur'!' responded with plenty of spirit, 'Well, if anyone tells me it's Scripture to marry the first smart young chap as comes along and leave your old dad to be done for by the servants, I don't believe 'em.'

When, somewhere about the year 1825, she became, not only virtually but actually, the head and owner of the 'White Hart,' Marlingford, she was three-and-twenty years old—which was then at least the equivalent of three-and-thirty now—while the finely



developed figure, the handsome head held like an empress, and already a distinct tendency in her very good-looking face to a double chin, encouraged the delusion that she was no longer perfectly young.

The part management of a public-house had indeed, perforce, given her a knowledge of life and human nature uncommon to youth. Never having been kept in clover and cotton-wool and fed on the soft pap of pretty illusions, as was the sheltered woman of her day, that ignorance which keeps—or kept—such women young—even painfully and pathetically young, all their lives—was not hers: she saw life, from her fine and candid eyes, very much as it is, and was going to make of it the best and cheerfullest she could.

At this time, her excellent and substantial house consisted, as it still does, on the ground floor of a great stone-flagged hall; on one side of it the commercial-room (where the Squire's rent-audit dinners had been held for generations); facing the street and portico, the large, cheerful bar; and behind it that stuffy, comfortable little bar parlour—Miss Bella's particular sanctum.

Below stairs were the vast, stone-flagged kitchens. From the hall, a fine black oak stairway, hung with sporting prints—valuable, though nobody knew it—led to a landing, whence opened bedrooms, with vast four-posters and minute jugs and basins, frowning mahogany furniture, and looking-glasses, always darkly set against snuff-brown walls and taking a malicious pleasure in revealing defects only. Near by was the best parlour—a large apartment of unspeakable dreariness, full of stale air, and an odour of best carpet; of ornaments bought by the lot at the sales it was one of Miss Bella's relaxations to attend (and with Lot 50 or 60 still adhering to them on tickets); of chairs in rows against the walls—and everywhere of the warning, 'All ease abandon ye who enter here.'

About once a week, its mistress visited this stately cavern, drew up the blinds, looked about it, felt proud of it, unshrouded a chair to see if its wool-worked covering was going on well; drew down the blinds, and left, satisfied. It was her concession to gentility—her bow, as it were, to the memory of Mrs. Damer, her instructress, the reduced lady who had never been one, and had fortunately never been able to make one, sham or real, of Miss Bella, but had left her a perfectly natural, sensible, genuine, whole-hearted human being.

Having locked the parlour door and put the key in an ample pocket, she returned to the real, earnest and indefatigable business of her busy life.

From the earliest days of her rule at the 'White Hart,' it had one feature sharply distinguishing it from almost all feminine rule—no pettiness.

Other women might be fretting themselves thin in their striving for perfection in little things, but Miss Bella's generous contours were not going to reduce themselves over specks of dust here and there or an unauthorised pink ribbon in a domestic cap.

She knew how—and such knowledge is rare—at once to overlook foibles, and to deal sharply with real faults; and, in an age when the employer was apt to think—or to act as if he thought—that hardships were only hard to him, and that Providence had kindly arranged that employees should enjoy incessant work, no holidays, and scanty sleep in abominable quarters, acted on the assumption that old Janey her nurse, Tabby and Susan the maids, Peter the boots, and the denizens of the kitchen, were much like herself both in faults and virtues and in preferring the pleasant to the unpleasant.

No one but Miss Bella, of course, could have successfully employed a cook so fat and wheezy as Martha; while she alone would have attempted, and succeeded, in so original an experiment as to turn old deaf, dumb, and crazy Bob into a kitchen and scullery maid.

One of those hapless creatures for whom the world has no use, who, in her father's day, was always hanging about the 'shades' and being alternately treated and kicked by the other wastrels who loitered there, Miss Bella had taken him into her warm considerations; sat pondering his case through a whole tea-time with dark eyes thoughtfully fixed on the fire, and her pretty fat feet toasting on the fender; then put down her teacup suddenly with 'I've got it, dad!' and the next day had it, in the form of Bob on his knees scrubbing the vast hall—to the great relief of Tabby, who had suggested sulkily to her mistress, 'This ain't gal's work!' and had been struck quite dumb by the unexpectedness of Miss Bella's answer, 'I don't know but what you're right, Tab! P'r'aps it ain't.'

Anyhow, Bob did it, and much else, hereafter. He loved Miss Bella with the fond faithfulness of a canine creature. When she passed him, he would catch her by the dangling sleeve women wore,

and point for her approval to his work ; and when she so approved, chuckled for joy. Presently, she taught him, not without pains and patience, a sort of patent lip-language which established a private code between them, and he was as happy as kings—are not.

As for the stables, they naturally presented greater difficulties in management for a *femme seule* in the days when ' Posting in all its branches ' meant something much more extensive than the one mouldy cab, with driver to match, it generally means now.

Having knitted her brows over the corn bills ; filed them ; placed on her lugubrious shawl and bonnet (being still in mourning for her father), she stepped across one fine day to ' The Feathers,' the rival hostelry opposite, kept by Mr. Badger, a ferrety-faced, red-haired man, who knew all there is to know about a horse, and was suspected in some quarters of being not unready to exchange his single state for a married one, and the substantial profits of the ' White Hart ' for the dwindling proceeds of his own concern.

He was standing outside ' The Feathers ' chatting to a friend when Miss Bella came up with him—and perhaps it was the chill air of what is aptly known in the county vernacular as ' a rafty morning ' that made him so red about the nose and bleary about his mean little eyes.

He asked her to step in, and she stepped ; noted in a single glance how dirty the parlour was ; and after a vigorous, cheerful and lengthy preamble—for it must be owned she had a terrifying supply of words—came to business. When she had jotted down a few particulars on a piece of paper, considered them with a forefinger on her lip, and replaced the memorandum in her pocket, Mr. Badger judged the moment had come for him to say—

' This ain't the business for a pretty young lady like you, Miss Ward ! '

Miss Ward said cheerfully, ' Well, I've got to do it, Mr. Badger.'

And Mr. Badger, shuffling his feet and looking out of the window, for there *was* something regal in Miss Bella which made such suitors approach her, as it were, obliquely, mumbled, ' A husband 'ud do it better for you.'

Miss Bella replied, ' Well, that depends on the husband '—a fact seemingly obvious, but to Mr. Badger so revolutionary that he quoted it against her as damning proof of strong-mindedness for the rest of his life.

The long street was full when she re-crossed it, for it was market

day; and in the pleasant, cold sunshine a great stallion—the most noble of powerful creatures, magnificent in his grace and strength—was being paraded up and down by his owner before the considering eyes of breeders and buyers.

Miss Bella, who knew every one, said with her deep laugh, as she too watched him, 'I am glad I don't pay *his* corn bill,' and proceeded cheerfully to her own stable-yard, where she explained suddenly, good-humouredly, and with the utmost decision, the revolutionary changes that must be made in the accounts presented to her.

The fact, apparently simple, that if you do not know your own business, and are not yourself personally interested in it, neither will your employees be, was one Miss Ward thoroughly realised in every branch of her art; so she bottled, pickled, preserved with her own hands and the wheezy assistance of old Martha, on many a morning; and when the results were ripe in the form of jams and sauces, ascended steps in a store-room to a vast high cupboard with an agility supposed to belong only to the slim and athletic bearing of the modern young woman.

If the guests of the house gobbled up her home-made marmalade long before oranges were cheap enough to make more, she appreciated the compliment, and the not less real one that her boar's head and rich, damp, black Christmas plum-pudding (and the liqueur brandy which followed it) attracted greedy elderly gentlemen to pay an unnecessary visit to the 'White Hart' in midwinter and its least busy time.

On at least one occasion, after a slight difference of opinion with Pearce, the decorator, she painted, papered, and whitewashed her little parlour entirely herself; and said, on a note of just triumph, to Miss George the barmaid, who had exclaimed 'La! did you ever, now!' 'It'll just teach that Pearce not to try and do me!' and it did.

But however busy Miss Bella might be, at eleven o'clock she discarded her apron, patted her regal black hair with her fat hand in front of the glass above her parlour chimney-piece, straightened the vivid bow on her blue dress, and went into the bar to help Miss George.

Miss George, who had dyed the front of her hair a gold which would not have deceived an infant, and had so long worn an arch and ogling manner as a matter of business that it had become natural, was really a most respectable spinster, who lived in

lodgings in Marlingford and supported a crippled niece ; and whose domestic and professional worth were both justly valued by her mistress.

Regularly in the middle of every week-day morning, the whole of Marlingford was seized, as it still is, with an incontrollable thirst, which led to that famous institution of the country town called the ' elevens.'

In the early nineteenth century, in all classes, though the era of perpetual drunkenness had passed, not so perpetual drinking. The Squire and his friends at the end of the dinner-party were no longer under the table ; but it was not only Lord Melbourne who took as a matter of course that by the time they joined the women in the drawing-room they should be considerably ' elevated by wine ' ; nor only Lord Melbourne who thought that such an elevation ' tended to increase the gaiety of society—it produced diversity.'

The stout farmers who came into Marlingford on market and sale days, and dined at Miss Bella's excellent ordinary, justified the dictum of Sydney Smith that all people above the condition of labourers were ruined by excess of meat and drink. If Mr. Cole, the solicitor, or his rival, Mr. Hilary, let a property or decided a quarrel, the business began, continued, and ended with somebody standing treat. Miss Bella's Boots helped the commercial gentlemen up to bed a hundred times more often than commercial, or any other, gentlemen need to be helped now ; and everybody in Marlingford was of the decided opinion that the delicate constitution of their spiritual pastor and master, Mr. Codrington, was the direct effect of, if not the judgment of Heaven on, an unnatural abstinence.

The ' elevens ' lasted, it is true, but a short time ; and he would have been a rigid temperance reformer who would not have admitted that the half-hour was pleasant, cheerful, and friendly ; while the takings of the house during that brief period would have been significant enough to make any Chancellor of the Exchequer's mouth water.

At twelve, Miss Bella dined in her parlour by herself ; Miss George dining at the same moment in her sanctum by herself : for that was etiquette.

What was, fortunately, not etiquette in Miss Bella's code was keeping one's servants at a moral distance ; and while Susan, who was very pretty, served an ample meal, Susan's employer permitted

herself to be entertained with the *on dits* of the kitchen and the history of Susan's sister's young man.

On one occasion, when the cloth was removed, says Miss Bella : ' Now fetch Peter ! ' ; and Susan, with a slightly alarmed expression, and Peter, slightly sheepish, stood before their employer, who looked at them both with her honest, fine eyes, and said in her contralto : ' Now, you two are keeping company. Don't say you aren't ! I've seen you. I'm not blaming you : it's nature. Only, what I do say is, with me too busy to have time to look after you, I can't have you loving here ; and one of you's got to go.'

They both went—in high dudgeon. But, a few years later, Miss Bella's was the handsomest present at their wedding, and Miss Bella's startling silk and richly beflowered, fruited, and ribboned bonnet the most creditable costume.

Mrs. Damer had of course carefully refrained from teaching her pupil anything so vulgarly useful as arithmetic. So, of an afternoon, surrounded by bills and ledgers, with her eyes fixed fiercely interrogative on the opposite wall, a slight flurry in her hair, and, on the table, fat fingers useful for counting, Miss Ward worked out her financial budget by a patent method of her own.

When the pence column came wrong for the second time, she said ' Drat 'em ! ' and had the rare wisdom and fortitude to leave it to itself till the next day—to recover its temper.

Now and again—about twice a month, perhaps—in her Sunday silk and a tippet over her shoulders coming into a plump waistband, she took tea with Mrs. Cole, the solicitor's wife, and her dimple-necked little girl, Maggie, who used to hunt for good things, never in vain, in the guest's capacious petticoat pocket, and who loved her, as all children loved Miss Bella and Miss Bella all children.

But the most genuine pleasure and excitement of her life was to attend local sales. At last, her substantial ankle in a white stocking, preceding the rest of her appearance from the high ' White Hart ' gig, was quite looked for by the dealers, standing in the straw and litter at the wide-opened hall door ; while at the sale itself, there was a large handsomeness about her dealings, a total inability to take mean advantages, which they soon discovered could not be attributed to inexperience and feminine gullibility.

The ' White Hart ' guest who found himself at night lapped softly in fine linen, and who dried his dripping person the next morning on towels which really sopped up moisture, owed those luxuries to her acumen as a bidder : though it is very true that

sometimes a feminine weakness for a bargain led her to bid for a lot simply because there were such lots of things in it, and that she became thereby possessed, at one and the same moment, of such warring objects as a canary in a cage, a fender, a flat-iron, a bolster, a huge manly pair of carpet slippers, and a complete set of the works of Voltaire—in the author's mother tongue.

At one time, there were further scattered about the 'White Hart' no less than five copies of the poems of Mrs. Amelia Opie (with the famous 'Go, youth beloved, in distant glades' as the *pièce de résistance*, and a picture of the Youth, Going, in peg-top trousers, as a frontispiece); while Miss Bella's parlour had a six-foot book-case quite full of classic and other authors, many uncut; and when she said, with her deep, resonant laugh, 'It's funny, now, how fond I am of books—I can't help buying 'em,' it really was, as she looked upon reading solely as a sedative for senile decay, and only pardonable when taken in connection with gruel, a foot-rest, and a real physical inability to employ one's time usefully.

But perhaps, as education would not have improved her natural parts and judgment, so neither would reading—which is 'thinking with other men's minds instead of one's own.'

She must have been about forty—still a very handsome woman, though the double chin from a threat had become a fact, and the fine colour on her cheeks deepened year by year—when there arrived unexpectedly one autumn afternoon a guest who looked like what she was in the habit of designating 'a stopper.'

To the modern English hotel-keeper, who receives his visitors with a demeanour which would be unnecessarily frigid if they were arriving for a term of years, for their sins, at a penal settlement, Miss Bella set an admirable example.

On her threshold, her welcome was large and genial. If the visitor objected to Bedroom No. 11 there were 12 and 14 ready for him to choose from, and all looking as cheerful as it was considered decent bedrooms should look in those days. In the coffee-room, later, she herself carved his excellent and substantial dinner for him, talking all the time, unless he happened to be a gloomy beast and only grunted in answer, desiring silence, when it was not her business to be offended, or, gentlemen not being supposed to like female opinions on politics, to advance hers, formed on that basis of natural good sense and a weekly newspaper.

To be cleverer than other people, and not to tell them so, is a



refinement of ability extremely rare in Miss Bella's sex ; but she had it.

To-night, however, the guest, who said little himself, seemed not averse to her cheerful loquacity ; asked a question or two, presently, about the neighbourhood, and thus let loose upon himself a perfect flood of information about soil, rents, tithes ; the shooting prospects and the price of butter ; a local failure, and the family history and professional charges of Mr. Williams ; until the stilton was on the table—portly in form, like its mistress, and as sound at heart—and she was obliged to pause for breath.

Mr. Roger Neame, as she had had plenty of time to note without any tiresome need to stop talking, was a youngish man—five-and-thirty, perhaps—with an ugly, pleasant, clever face ; some weakness about the mouth ; great kindness about the eyes ; rather slovenly in dress, and yet, as Miss Ward said meditatively to Sally George, when she came later into her sanctum to say Good night, ' a gentleman, Sally, or a *has-been-one*.'

Miss George, tying her bonnet-strings, hazarded that perhaps he had come to lie low in Marlingford from insistent creditors ; and then, romantically, that he might be looking for a wife.

Bella Ward replied ' Fudge ! ' to that. When at dinner the next evening she had exhaustively described Marlingford Church, Rectory, and Rector—being constantly led off into side tracks expatiating on Mr. Codrington's relations—Neame looked up from his plate and said—there was a very pleasant twinkle in his eye at times—that he was a parson's son himself, Miss Ward rightly felt she had fixed him, and saw in fancy, as she had seen a hundred times in reality, the teeming and starving country rectory, the delicate, worn wife, the gentle, ineffectual man of God, and the brood of children with their hungry bright eyes, and little mouths and minds waiting to be fed.

That night, while Neame was finishing his wine, Miss Bella entered his bedroom ; explored shelves and drawers ; finally, the two dilapidated carpet-bags with strings round their waists which had contained his possessions ; and went down to her sitting-room armed with the socks and shirts whose holes called the loudest to be filled.

Very cosy was that little parlour of an evening ; its bright firelight playing on the glass doors of the book-case, and its red curtains drawn warmly about the windows.

If Bella Ward had not had the supreme advantage of life, ' to

be born with a bias to some pursuit,' she had had always what it is the common bane of the unmarried woman to lack—a regular and necessary occupation—no need to invent accomplishments, as the idle woman did then; or philanthropies, as she does now.

Yet no one could look at her and fail to see that Nature had had its natural purpose when it cast her in those generous lines: gave her that broad 'mother's breast for tired head'; made her for ever the abundant giver; no fear of responsibilities and no timid pruderies.

Sometimes of late, despite the fact that she was always busy to the utmost limit of business, she had felt vaguely dissatisfied and depressed: attributed the strange sensation to that even then useful scapegoat, an incipient influenza; and was not pleased with old Williams when he diagnosed her complaint as a slow bilious fever—a disease once as universal as now happily obsolete—and suggested—fool!—the melancholy might be cured by a little more society.

When she came downstairs again, with a scarlet shawl draped about her amplitude (which made her look more than ever like Boadicea or Zenobia of Palmyra, if such royal ladies can be conceived as convalescent from slow bilious fevers and wrapped in a late aunt's plaid), she filled her convalescence by stitching at dolls' clothes for that nice little dear, Maggie Cole. Facing facts, she owned to herself she would prefer to be stitching for her own nice little dears rather than for other people's: that she wanted some one to want her, be it only the old dad—and he the lamp gone out, living after his 'flame lacked oil.'

To be sure, in a short time, and with recovered health, that strange disposition to ask *Cui bono*? passed away; but all the same the thwarted motherliness in her wide heart found some satisfaction in the fact that No. 14 did want doing for and looking after; that it would soon become incumbent for what Swift called 'a necessary woman' to make him a set of winter shirts, and establish over him, as it were, a benevolent protectorate.

About a fortnight after his arrival, Miss Ward was actually cutting those garments out of a length of Welsh flannel—purchased without any consultation with the future owner—on her sitting-room table one evening, when, with a tap on the door, he entered to pay his bill; and on her cheerful 'Sit down a bit, Mr. Neame, it's coldish to-night,' sat down by her fire, stared at it, and held out a hand to the blaze. It was a large hand, strong, well-formed,

and not too clean ; or steady. Bella Ward had found out by now that her guest preferred to say little and never looked one in the face.

He turned his head now, however, and remarked ' You're busy.'

And, leaning across the table to chop competently with the scissors, she made answer through the pins in her mouth, ' You'll always find me that, Mr. Neame.'

There was a silence for a moment—but pins in the mouth do not prevent one seeing with one's eyes ; then Neame fumbled in his pockets, produced a few sovereigns, and the bill, rather the worse for wear, and put them on a corner of the table.

One of the surest signs of being educated is to have pens, ink, and paper to hand and all in the same place. Miss Ward's handsome eyes searched the room for the ink, without at all expecting to find it ; lighted on a dilapidated quill ; discarding it, and finally producing a broken stump of pencil from a heterogeneous collection of yard-measures, beads, buttons, and emery cushions in the bottom of a mahogany work-box, she indited a few hieroglyphs on the bottom of the document, and said :

' Well, I dare say we shan't quarrel if that *ain't* very clear ! ' and added, moistening the pencil at her lips for a final effort to make it write the date, ' I hope you're making a long stay in my house, Mr. Neame ? '

Still looking at the fire, Neame said he might be ; and, as an afterthought, that he was very comfortable.

Bella Ward said, very truly, ' Well, whatever you're wanting, you've only to ask for it.' Then she came and took the chair opposite, and, warming that pretty foot on the fender-stool elaborately worked by herself, inquired : ' I think you told me you're a medical gentleman ? '

Neame said with a half laugh, ' Well, I was.'

She asked if it had been in London, and entered into a long history of what Mr. Williams (who had indeed never visited it) had told her concerning the doings of those proverbially wild young dogs, the students at the hospitals ; inquired with her free and cheerful laugh if her present guest had ever beaten the old Charlies in their watch-boxes : concerning the gruesome tales people used to tell about the Resurrectionists—' I dessay most of 'em were lies,' says Miss Bella comfortably—and if he had ever seen the great Sir Astley.

Neame sat staring in the fire a minute without answering. Miss Ward, who was much too good-tempered to take offence where none was meant, stretched out a hand for her work, and stitched at a sleeve of the shirt.

Presently, Neame told her that he had been a student at the united hospital of Guy and St. Thomas; and had attended the great Sir Astley's lectures on surgery there. 'Uncommon handsome, Sir Astley,' says Roger with a smile, 'and dressed to the nines.' After a pause, he added that it was through the great doctor's influence he himself, after he had passed the College of Surgeons and the Apothecaries' Society, had been made Apothecary to the Westminster General Dispensary.

The present generation has forgotten that the name of the great Sir Astley Cooper was one to conjure with, and for many years second only in fame and interest to that of the great Duke of Wellington himself; so that to have been a *protégé* of the courtly surgeon, with his urbane address, his charming presence, his shrewd observation of human nature, and his enormous professional success, was no small distinction.

Miss Ward, letting her work rest in her lap, was justified in saying 'Lor, now! Just fancy!' and regarding her guest with increased respect.

He laughed to himself, and, still staring in the fire, said 'I'm not 'pothecary to the Hospital now. I—left that and set up for myself. Last month, I—left that too.'

His hostess, considering him—she could not see his face, but only the back of the ugly, clever head and the place where the curly hair grew softly in his neck as it does in a baby's—suggested he only wanted some good country air to set him up again and make him fit for his work.

'We must feed you up a bit, Mr. Neame,' she said. 'Ill once don't mean ill for ever, I should hope, with a fine, upstanding young man like yourself'; and her hearty voice was a tonic.

Neame had risen as she was speaking. 'I'm not taking up any practice again,' he said shortly. Then, catching sight of the book-case, 'Why, you've got a rare lot of books here! Are you a reader?'

And Miss Ward said cheerfully, 'No, I don't *read* 'em'—as though books had various other uses; added 'though you never know what you may come to if you get the time': felt in the petticoat pocket for a vast ring of keys; subtracted one: handed

it to her visitor, saying 'Now, you keep it, and come and fetch any of those books as often as you like.' And when he had opened the glass doors and taken one, she said with a kind of maternal pride in it, 'That's a handsome book, now, ain't it? I bought it only last Tuesday at the Reverend Thompson's sale for two shillings' (as indeed she had, and brought it home tied up in a counterpane with half a dozen patent rat-traps for the stable and a beaded fire-screen endeavouring to represent Princess Victoria riding with Lord Melbourne).

Neame's laugh was quite frank and natural as he put the handsome 'Odes of Anacreon' (in the original) under his arm and thanked her. When he laughed like that, there was something boyish and simple about him, and all his ugliness softened.

For ten minutes after he left, Bella Ward sat with his shirt in her lap, doing nothing; and might have sat there longer but that her duty, and the crowded cheerfulness of the bar without, recalled her to it. In an atmosphere as thick as suet and as hot and cheerful as a Christmas pudding, she served her customers briskly, as usual, while Sally George was at her supper: put a head on the conversation, as it were, as well as the glasses of ale: leant her substantial arm, with the hanging sleeve falling from it and revealing its white comeliness, on the bar, as she chatted with old Williams, or listened to the spicy local gossip purveyed by a dismal old gentleman over his pewter in the corner. Presently, if the conversation passed a certain rubicon—and she was not the kind of fool to expect the talk of a tap-room to suit Mrs. Damer and a young ladies' seminary—knocked briskly on her bar with a 'Now, gentlemen! If you please, gentlemen!' The offender said 'No offence, miss,' sheepishly, and buried his stupid red face in his pint pot; and Miss Ward, from her shining background of glasses and bottles, and with that atmosphere of beer and tobacco rising about her in warm clouds, changed the conversation.

Presently, when Mr. Malkin, the new grocer's assistant, was paying her one of those bald, personal compliments (which set on edge the teeth of the refined, and which Miss Ward estimated at its just value and did not at all dislike), Roger Neame came down the broad staircase, and, as the company watched him in a half silence, went out of the great hall-door.

The old gossip in the corner lifted his head and said 'That chap might as well do his drinking here. Your stuff's as good as any in Marlingford, I'll lay, Miss B.'

Miss Bella replied, 'You're right there, Mr. Smithers; but I suppose a gentleman can go out for a turn without going for a drink?'

Mr. Smithers returned, 'He can, miss, but he don't!' which was loudly enjoyed as at once witticism and truism.

A keen observer—only there were none, unless it might have been old Williams—would have detected some shadow and thoughtfulness on Miss Ward's face as she pursued her duties until closing-time.

It was the custom of the 'White Hart' never to send in its bill until asked—and not always then. But in about three weeks' time Miss Ward, not having been paid by 'No. 14' since his first fortnight, saw fit to break through that rule, and sent up his account to him: or rather a part of his account, for it was also her habit to include in the daily charge most of the items a narrower nature would have considered as extras, and to leave the undoubted extras to the guest's memory and honour—a system which generally, to the credit of mankind, went to prove the dictum of Scripture that the liberal soul shall be made fat.

Having dispatched the account by old Bob on a tray, and that functionary having returned and made a series of sounds and faces at his mistress which she received with 'Yes, Bob, you're a good boy, and now be off to your tea,' Miss Ward sat down to hers, and at the second cup and third muffin Roger Neame appeared, as she expected.

She pointed, with the muffin, to a chair, poured him out a cup of tea which he left untasted; and when he muttered something about the bill, said at once, clear and candid, 'Well, Mr. Neame, you can pay it now, or later—just as you like; but I wanted a word with you.'

He looked up, as if to speak; thought better of it, and stared silently at his broken boot.

Bella Ward stood up, with her fat hand, with its crease for a wrist, on the high mantelshelf, and looked down at him—at the ugly, clever head and that place where the hair grew in his neck like a baby's; at the unsteady hands he held out to the fire, and the new shirt-cuffs.

'Be a man, Mr. Neame!' she said suddenly in her deep voice. 'Pull up! You're clever—what with all those languages you read and 'pothecary to the Westminster, I dare say a great deal cleverer than any of us down here know. And you're a young

man. Get the better of it! I'm not the one' (and indeed she was not) 'to think any the worse of a gentleman for taking his glass too much—say of a Christmas Day, or a party. It's natural. And if he can take his bottle and be none the worse for it, let him take it, as my old dad used to say, and be thankful; but if he's unlucky, and two or three glasses is too much for him, what I say is, he must stop at one. And to be always at it, like you are, Mr. Neame, if you'll forgive me—that's ruin. Do you think I haven't seen a precious lot of fools in my bar drinking themselves out of their money and their situations? You take my word for it—lots. Well, they *were* fools, most of 'em. But you're different, and you're a gentleman.'

'Was once,' says Roger Neame, kicking at the coal in the fire with that broken boot.

Then he laughed shortly, jingled some coin in his pocket, and said: 'No. 14 required for another guest, I suppose?'

Bella Ward answered, 'Stuff and nonsense!' and tapped her foot impatiently. 'Drat the bill!' she said, 'if that's bothering you. Get something to do, pull up, and stay here as long as you please and I'm pleased to have you.'

'And if I don't pull up?' says Roger, kicking the fire again.

'Well, if you don't,' says Bella Ward, 'it's damnation.'

When there was complete silence in the little parlour, one could hear in it the great tick of the Dutch clock in the passage outside, and for a moment it filled the room.

Then Miss Ward stooped, briskly made up the fire and swept up the hearth as if there, too, was a new beginning; and as Neame stared at her without seeing her, added in the rich, softer voice she had used to her old father, 'Come, now, Mr. Neame, make me a promise. If there isn't anybody to keep straight for, keep straight for yourself. There's all those books,'—she waved her hand at them—'a clever gentleman like you must be able to get something sensible out of 'em: and if you feel upstairs as there's no way of getting rid of the blues except another bottle, come down here for a chat and a good cup of tea with me, and you're welcome'; and her round, full voice was welcome in itself.

At that moment Sally George's dyed head came round the door with 'You're wanted, Miss B.' And Miss Bella, divining apparently by instinct what she was wanted for, dived in her pocket for the keys, and left.



It would not be true to say that for the next few weeks No. 14 engrossed all, or even most, of her thoughts; for what with the ever-running stream of passing commercials (a most particular class, requiring the beef always juicy and the stilton for ever at the psychological moment of ripeness), with old Martha puffing and panting with an autumn asthma, the kitchen-maid's lover detected walking out with some one else, and old Bob in bed with a chill, there were powerful distractions. But they did not prevent her from carving at the coffee-room's dinner as usual: and if Neame was its sole occupant, as, the time of year being dull, he generally was, flowing with conversation for his benefit from the soup to the cheese.

There was no more pettiness about her in this new relation of life than in any other. If he ordered his pint of claret, it was fetched and warmed at the fire, as if that conversation in her parlour had never taken place. If he *was* to drink, said Bella Ward to herself, better in her decent house than at 'The Feathers' with that Badger drinking with him, and all the place knowing it. He always got himself to bed without the assistance of Boots: for it had been from the first his snare that his head was so strong that what left another man incapable left him steady enough—for the next bottle; and that drink had rotted body and nerves, and left the brain incapable of occupying itself with anything but trash for more than a few minutes, without making him drunk, as the experienced—like Bella Ward—knew drunkenness.

Not that she mistook it under its new aspect. Stoking the coffee-room fire before she left him of an evening, she always said 'My tea's at nine, and very glad to see you for a cup.' And when night after night he did not come, she took up her accounts or sewing or the rare, difficult letter to be indited to a frowsy old aunt at Islington; and only broke off the occupation for a second—biting her thread thoughtfully, or mending the one dilapidated quill—to consider, though not in the phrase of Scripture, how no man may save his brother nor make atonement unto God for him.

Every night, for about a fortnight, No. 14 was still over his bottle behind the substantial closed door of the coffee-room when she went upstairs to say Good night to old Bob—whose weak frame resisted his indisposition and old Williams's remedies but ill. Then, one evening as she sat in her parlour, having come for the moment to the end of her needlework, and feeling quite in danger of being thrown back on her books for half an hour's occupation, her eye

caught the heap of music, rather dusty, under the spinet, and she remembered it was six months or so since she had sung to it.

Abundantly overflowing the music-stool with herself and her full petticoats, she played a few chords (the spinet had a weak, shrill treble and several notes missing in the bass), and then, in that rich voice which years had not weakened, broke into one of the silly songs which in any other would have sounded thin and poor, and in hers filled the little room with deep harmony, like a great organ.

Self-consciousness had not the least part in her disposition : she had never thought, and did not think now, if she sang well or ill. When the sheet of music slid down, she propped it up again and said ' Drat ! ' and when a melting chord was too conspicuously wrong to be passed over, picked it out more or less right, and resumed.

She gave no sign that she knew when the door behind her was pushed open : that she saw Neame, in the attitude characteristic of him, sitting in the chair by the fire, stooping over it, holding the large trembling hands to the blaze ; or that, an hour later perhaps, in a pause necessary for snuffing the guttering spinet candles—a pause that broke a spell—she heard again the creak of the door, and knew that his place was empty.

Presently, standing on the hearthrug looking down at the print of muddy boots—he had sometimes the habit of long, aimless walks in the clayey neighbourhood round about Marlingford—she shook her wise and handsome head, and said in her heart, ' I must find something that he can do himself.'

The next day, she called on old Mr. Williams at his surgery. The little room was full of glass bottles and the smell of drugs, and did not disdain to exhibit among its wares, pomatums, soaps, and hair-oils.

Old Williams, who had been pounding something of obnoxious appearance in a pestle and mortar, ceased that occupation ; pushed his spectacles up on to his old forehead, and said with a twinkle in his pleasant old eye that he hoped he wasn't going to have the pleasure of prescribing for Miss Ward.

Miss Ward was able to inform him in her hearty voice that the sequelæ (she did not use this fine word) which he had prophesied to her bilious fever had not come off ; and that she found herself as well able to enjoy a tumbler of port wine negus to her supper as she had ever done in her life.

Then she added briskly, ' It's my No. 14 I've come about. That man wants something to do.'

Mr. Williams, after a pause, doubted if he was fit to do anything.

Then says Bella Ward, 'There's Potter's End. It's a beastly place, Mr. Williams. Sally George says there's typhus there again : and always will be, I say, so long as Squire's cottages are such a deal worse than his pigstyes. I'm no better than a Radical, Mr. Williams, you'll be saying,' and she laughed. 'Well, never mind that. I thought you could say that you've tried your hand at Potter's End ; and that it'll oblige you if he'll try his for a bit. It 'ud be no loss ; for I never heard of anybody that could manage to pay for drugs out of nine shillings a week, with a fam'ly ; and those people there, *they* won't care if they know he was drunk yesterday and'll be the same again to-morrow—for it's what they'd all be if they could ; and, says I, as they are, small blame to 'em !' and she paused for breath.

For three weeks, Roger Neame, about every other day, put in a professional appearance at Potter's End ; and, if he had not seen the futility of telling persons, who had no other drinking-water, to abstain from that beneath 'the green mantle of the stagnant pool,' and of recommending cleanliness, decency, and chastity to a family of ten or twelve inhabiting a two-roomed cottage, might have offered a little 'nonsense and advice.' As it was, they liked him as they could never have liked kindly, respectable old Williams. For Neame was the under-dog as they were—the refuse of the social system ; and, 'ignorant as the beasts that perish,' they were not likely to perceive the difference between them—that he was where he was through his own fault, and they, by none of theirs.

He got a few drugs from old Williams's surgery, and Bella Ward paid for them ; as she also sent milk and eggs to a girl dying of consumption, and a blanket to cover a poor, shivering old body—without the slightest hope that she was doing real good to anybody but Neame ; for she was too sensible a woman to suppose that the most sensible individual effort could remove the dumb misery and the cruel wrongs of the agricultural labourer of that day.

When Neame returned, there was always a fire in the 'White Hart' coffee-room almost large enough to endanger the safety of the house ; and, presently, a cup of potent coffee steaming hot on a tray.

At dinner, as his hostess carved briskly, she said 'You'd think now, wouldn't you, as if Parliament put their stoopid heads together they could make things a bit better ? Why, I could

tell 'em, Mr. Neame, that no one can live decent if they haven't a decent place to live in ; and that they're not likely to save if they're sure to come to the poor-house, whether they do or they don't' ; and she cut off the wing of the fat roast chicken with so liberal a hand that half the creature was depleted.

For a while, indeed, it seemed to her, her plan had so far succeeded that Neame certainly drank less. Coming into the coffee-room one night before she went to bed, having left her keys there, she found him asleep in his chair—with the pint of port untasted beside him ; and yet, as he slept, more than ever about him that fatal air of a decay which was at once physical, mental, and moral.

When she had stood a moment, watching him, with her face full of a great compassion, she put a couple of blocks of coal softly on the fire with her fingers ; and, as she left the room, turned and looked at him again.

A few days later she had him ill on her hands.

The cold air of Potter's End smelt of disease and foulness—and even a man in health might have forfeited it in some of those homes. Old Williams, who made a mistake whenever it was possible, here found it impossible ; said : ' I don't know there's much the matter with him ; but in his state every little's much ' ; and Neame, after he had roamed about the house for a few days (Miss George, fed on romance, said it gave her quite a turn to meet him wandering like a lost spirit), and sat shivering over the coffee-room fire, and shivering again in Miss Ward's parlour for an hour of an evening, yielded to her determination and went to bed.

If people miss splendid opportunities of happiness, they find strange ones ; and that November fortnight was a memory Bella Ward liked to keep.

The clean gauntness of Room No. 14 became friendly with a fire cheerfully crackling and spluttering in its grate—lighting up the samplers on the wall Bella had worked as a child, Mr. Williams's many medicine bottles on the mantelpiece (guarded at one end by a statuette of the Duke of Wellington, very nosey, and at the other by Mr. Pitt, very prosy declaiming to the House of Commons) ; and presently a many-coloured shawl Miss Ward spread over the patient's feet, and a fat red pincushion she placed on the chilly whiteness of his dressing-table.

She was more than busy in the morning, and it was Boots (who meant well, but had not exactly been framed by nature for a sick nurse) who deposited the breakfast-tray on the patient's toes ; but after the ' elevens '—when the cheerful noises in the bar, ' the

loud laugh that speaks the vacant mind,' and sometimes even Miss Ward's deep tones, travelled up to the patient—there presently became audible the breathing of the stout who climb, and Miss Ward entered his room, and, standing looking at him, said 'How's yourself, Mr. Neame?'

Of course she did not need to ask. He always said he was better, and saw she did not listen to his answer, but looked for it in his face.

Sometimes she gave him his medicine—an awful medicine, thick, black, and treacly, and filling half a tumbler; or she rubbed his rheumatic shoulder with great strength and vigour and a lotion from a vast bottle labelled 'Poison,' talking all the time, till he said 'Hold hard!' and she allowed five minutes' holiday.

If she had been of his own class in life, or of what had been once his own class, he might have felt some embarrassment at her ministrations. As it was, he had none; the squeamishness of the very refined was not hers. She was wholly motherly and comfortable, without the least trait of that abominable professional cleverness which thinks it knows better than the patient what he feels and desires.

If he said he was too hot, she removed the parti-coloured shawl; if he said he was too cold, she pulled the long bell-pull for old Jane and the warming-pan. But, none the less, she had him at her mercy—the stronger creature, dependent. It was natural she should be happy.

When that supremely important affair, the commercials' midday dinner, had been disposed of, somewhere between three and four o'clock of the brief winter afternoon, he would hear again the light step and the heavy breathing of the stout on the staircase, and, with the domestic feminine sound of full petticoats, she came in, with a Minerva Press volume, kindly lent by Miss George, under her arm, and taking the woolworked chair (removed from the best parlour) would read aloud the flowing soft trash, so admirable for inducing sleep.

She was quite surprised when the inmate of the bed sometimes chuckled.

'I am glad it amuses you, Mr. Neame,' she said heartily; 'it don't me. Silly stuff, I call it.'

Roger Neame said 'D—d rot, I call it. Go on, please.'

And she went on, till he slept.

Uneducated taste, if not deliberately perverted, is seldom really bad; and when presently, at Neame's suggestion, she got 'Clarissa

Harlowe' (one of her, so to speak, unconscious purchases at a sale) and read aloud that long-drawn pathos, the result was that her handkerchief, which was so practical as to be almost a young sheet and quite a little table-cloth, was wet through; and when she came to the part where Lovelace writes, 'Dear Belton, it is all over, and Clarissa lives,' if she did not 'get up like a fury' and weep 'like an infant' and 'curse and damn Lovelace till exhausted'—as Haydon had done—she paid Mr. Richardson no less compliment when, dabbing at her swollen eyes and nose, she said vindictively, 'I should like to have seen myself buying that book if I'd known what was in it! A pretty scoundrel, that Lovelace! I shall put it behind the fire'; and the patient, from the aperture of his curtains, laughed, like the boy his heart had not quite ceased to be, and said 'Don't be a fool, Bella!'

He was as accustomed to her by now as she to him.' When it was too dark to read, she entertained him with the gossip of Marlingford—having only twice been out of it in her life, she was naturally supremely interested in how much Madam Hewlett paid her cook, and how little Mrs. Cole paid for her bonnets—and the gossip might have been vulgar gossip, only vulgarity implies meanness, vanity, pretence, and Bella Ward had none of those things.

If a rumour was spiteful, her generosity counteracted it, like salt on corruption. 'It's a funny thing, Mr. Neame,' she said—after a breathlessly long story, in which He says to Her and She says to Me played confusing parts—'p'r'aps you've noticed it yourself—but if there is a bad and a good thing to believe about people you'd better believe the good—it's more often right.'

And after a long silence, the voice from the bed said 'Not always, though.'

The patient was worse before he was better. The chill affected his lungs. For two or three nights Miss Ward sat up with him, looking more than ever like Cleopatra or Zenobia in her dressing-gown of deep royal red; and for ever dependable, wakeful, comfortable.

As the idea that it was possible to live at all without frequent and liberal doses of alcohol—even if it had been the one, only, and express cause of the disease from which you were suffering—had not occurred to the most enlightened, she spent a fair part of the night in mulling claret or preparing hot bishop—a most engaging drink, composed of port mixed with lemon and spice.

Sometimes, when she was sure he slept, she softly drew his curtain and looked at her charge—at the clever face with the



ugly lines of dissipation drawn deep in it—at the thick curly hair; and presently softly covered with the shawl the powerful hand and wrist bare on the counterpane, as a mother covers an infant. The pity of it! the pity of it! Yet, as she tiptoed back to the fire, she told herself most truly that if he had been sober and right with the world, there would have been a wife—ten chances to one, silly, tearful and *exigeante*—tending him now; or some officious, bustling sister, expecting the 'White Hart' to be all ready-made and suitable for illness (which it certainly was not) and the best Ipswich physicians sitting, figuratively, on the doorstep.

One night, at that cold, strange hour before the dawn, Neame woke, and seemed disposed for conversation. He said that once or twice when he had caught sight of Bella sitting there, it had reminded him of some illness of his boyhood and his mother watching him.

'Only she was so thin and delicate,' he said. 'There were too many of us—that's a fact.'

Miss Ward might have said, 'and a common one.' But the word 'thin' set her off at a tangent, and it was not till she had explained that she personally took stoutness as the decree of Heaven, and refused to be pinched in the waist by Miss Mullins (the dressmaker), ('because if you squeeze it in, in one place, Mr. Neame, it's bound to come out in another, and you're uncomfortable for nothing,') she asked a few questions about his mother and his old home: heard the answers in silence, and said slowly, presently, 'Did you never think of getting married, Mr. Roger?'

The patient did not reply for a minute. Then said, with a laugh, 'Well, I haven't.'

And Bella Ward made answer (for they had come to much plainness of speech), 'Perhaps she'd have pulled you up.'

Whereat Neame replied, 'That's your blessed ignorance, Bella. I dare say that old muddler, Williams, has been telling you a man can stop drinking if he will; while the real fact of the matter is the stuff's poisoned him till he *can't will*.' He paused; then added, 'One day, every good old fool of a Williams'll know that too, as well as he knows the difference between measles and small-pox'; and when, after a longer silence, Bella Ward looked up at him, he seemed to be asleep.

She sat wide awake till it was light—sometimes softly putting on coals, and then staring at them as they burnt away—all her fine face softened and considering.



When Neame woke at seven, he smiled a little. She had dozed off, not at all as heroines in books and little children in real life, sleep—beautifully, the exquisite, breathing image of that lovely thing, Repose—but as reader and writer sleep after long fatigue—the mouth a little open, the head nodding, and a faint snore now and again bearing witness to unconsciousness.

At that restful and homely sight, the patient turned on his pillow and himself slept again: till Boots, cannonading on the door as one determined to wake the dead, brought the new day and the breakfast.

In spite of the fact that to watch an invalid all night and perform the innumerable duties of her calling all day was abominably fatiguing, Bella Ward was all the same strangely aware that she was sorry when Neame grew slowly better and needed her less.

One night, coming as usual into her parlour as she played and sang, he stayed till she had finished; when she joined him at the fire and began to see about the tea, made a gesture to stop her.

'Look here, Bella!' he said abruptly, 'I don't know how long I've been here, but it's weeks now since I last paid you; and this doesn't look as if I shall do much more;' and with a bitter laugh he thrust a much-crossed letter into her hand, which Miss Ward—having vainly searched, first her great work-box, then two vases on the mantelpiece, and finally, successfully, under the horsehair bolster of the sofa, for the spectacles she had just adopted for reading—slowly considered.

Then she folded the sheet and returned it, saying 'Well, Mr. Roger, I think your sister's right. What with five children, and her husband only a curate, I don't think you ought to take money from her.'

Neame broke in with 'As though I don't know that!' And then, 'You'd better kick me out, Bella!'

Miss Ward said 'Oh, had I?' with only half her attention on the words. She was searching in a vast dusty heap of bills and circulars for a pass-book, which she at last withdrew, saying 'Now I've got you!' as if it were in the habit of running away.

She came back to the fire, and, sitting down, looked into the book, shut it up again, and took off her spectacles and cased them.

'Between you and me and the doorpost, Mr. Roger,' she said, 'this public's doing a very good business. The commercials pay well—though it is cut and come again in their room both to the

joint and the apple-tart—where the coffees' (thus their hostess designated the higher orders who ate in the coffee-room) 'as often as not, like yourself, say "You overdo me, Miss B." to the first helping. And we do a good high-class business in drinks. There's no denying it. The young man at the Bank,' she tapped the pass-book, 'him and me, we don't often agree on my balance; but it's always a pretty good one. And this month, if you please, if that boy don't make it a hundred pounds more than I do! "You'll find I'm right, Miss Ward," says he, sniggering. Those boys as were doing twice-one-are-two at the dame-school a year or two ago are always so precious positive. But I believe he's got me this time.' She laughed cheerfully, and was suddenly grave again. 'So, if you please, Mr. Roger, let's have no more nonsense about your going away. I suppose I can sometimes afford myself a visitor as I don't send in a bill to. You're welcome here as long as you want to stay—and to whatever you choose. I don't make no conditions. But I do say as it'd please me if—well, if you'd not take more than's good for you. But if you do—well, I'm your friend still—but I'm sorry for it.'

For a few minutes that full tick of the Dutch clock in the passage filled the room.

Then Neame, who had been sitting with his chin in his hand, staring absently in front of him, seeing nothing, lifted his great head.

'I was a stranger, and ye took me in,' he said with his smile, 'sick, and ye visited me—'

And Bella Ward broke through with 'I don't do it for religion, Mr. Roger; I'm too busy for much of that, what with my gentlemen such lie-a-beds of a Sunday morning. I do it because I like you.'

And with a sudden break in his voice, says Roger Neame, 'That's all the better.'

He sat opposite her for half an hour or more perhaps, hearing, without listening, her long flowing stories of Marlingford politics and her deep, rich voice, and then got up and left her without a word.

That evening, in the crowded bar, old Smithers in his distant corner gave utterance to the now well-accepted scandal, that Miss Ward's guest was never, as you might say, hisself and sober; and Miss Ward, who had an excellent power of hearing or not hearing her customers' remarks, as seemed best, called down to Mr. Smithers, across that well-filled atmosphere of beer and tobacco, 'What's

that you're saying, Mr. Smithers ? ' And Smithers—for it is nearly as embarrassing to be asked to repeat one's remarks as to put them down an ear-trumpet—replied, ' It warn't nowt, Miss B. ' ; whereon Bella Ward leant on her bar and spoke down the room.

' Whatever my guest's faults may be,' she said, ' they're above board, so to say, and we all know 'em. P'r'aps there's some of us here as have done worse—only we haven't been found out ' ; and she faced them all.

Just a week later, the Squire's rent-audit dinner—when his tenants came to pay their dues and dined with their lord and his agent in the 'White Hart's' vast commercial-room—found itself complicated with preparations for Christmas, and Miss Bella decorating the great hall with holly and mistletoe as well as baking, beating, and whisking in the kitchen to an extent which would have made any other woman peevish and worried, and left her thoroughly enjoying her energies and serenely mistress of her temper and of fate.

The dinner took place at four o'clock, and by half-past three she had done her hair for it in a mode which she had not the least idea was classic, covered her new magenta gown with an apron, and taken a final review of the long table, already groaning with cold viands, whips and jellies, blancmanges, tarts, cheese-cakes, mince puffs, and pies.

Returned to her sitting-room, she found old Bob on a step-ladder, muttering and gurgling with enjoyment as he trimmed the pictures from a heap of holly on the table ; and, just come in from the town, Neame, in an old caped driving-coat he sometimes wore, with deep pockets, and his hands deep in them.

He looked up as she came in.

' Fancy you out such a day as this, Mr. Neame ! ' she said.

It was, in fact, the weather English people call seasonable—the word appearing to be a synonym for everything that is detestable.

' I wanted something in the town,' he said briefly. Then he held his left hand—a cold, red member—to the fire.

' There's every bit as much as I can do,' says Miss Ward briskly, ' carving for a party like Squire's ; and I shall be at it a couple of hours. But you shall have your dinner sent up, Mr. Roger, at six, if Bob here has to bring it you.'

Neame said indistinctly it didn't matter about the dinner ; then, still warming his left hand and keeping the other in his pocket, added, with difficulty, ' You've been a deal too good to me, Bella.

Miss Ward, not noticing the past tense, and with most of her mind on something she had omitted to see to on the dinner-table, merely said 'Stuff!' Then, as her attention returned to him and something in his face struck her, 'I'm not sure now as we didn't have you up out of bed too soon! You don't look any too grand.'

And an agitated female voice, as of one in a crisis, summoned her to the kitchen.

When she returned ten minutes later, Neame had gone.

The dinner was warm work. When the carving was done, Bella Ward's cheeks rivalled her gown. Coming out of the commercial room—full of noise and talk, of humanity relaxing and enjoying itself, and of the steam from hot dishes—she sat down for half a minute's rest, and mopping of her brow in her own room, where the after-dinner wine was cooling in a bucket of water. Calling Sally George from the bar, she bade her go upstairs for a clean handkerchief.

In three minutes, perhaps, there was a sound that brought Bella Ward to her feet and her heart to her mouth, and Sally George scurrying down the oak staircase like a terrified rabbit.

She fell into the little parlour, gasping out, 'Fourteen's shot himself!'

And Bella Ward, pulling herself together with the mightiest effort of her life, said simply, 'If you make one sound, Sally George, I'll have this bucket of water over you'; pushed her into a chair, said 'Get yourself a glass of brandy; if they ring in there it'll be for the wine, and you're to take it: and say nothing till I tell you. They won't have heard the shot through the din they're making, and he mayn't have done more than hurt himself.'

Then, with her heart beating like a sledge-hammer all over her body, but particularly in her throat, she ran upstairs as she had never run since she was a girl.

Roger Neame was lying in 'No. 14,' not horrible or disfigured but with a little hole deep in the curly hair, and a pistol by his side.

\* \* \* \* \*

For many years after that tragic nine days' wonder, the 'White Hart' lived and flourished: even that demoniacal invention (from the innkeeper's point of view), the steam railway, not disturbing its prosperity—the railway-builder himself realising that few persons ever wished to get to Marlingford, and that fewer still wished to get away.

So the commercials continued to drive up to the columned

porch in their laden gigs from Ipswich : elderly, whiskered squires, intent on buying a horse on a sale day, rode to it as heretofore. The bar was full of the pleasant, weather-beaten old faces of the local farmers, and Miss Ward, if she had to use what she called 'jiggery pokery' to make that balance in her pass-book what the dapper young bank clerk made it, was quite at one with him that it was considerable.

If she had lived now, she would have been treated, at Roger Neame's death, for that multitude of misery covered by the phrase 'a nervous breakdown.' But dear old Mr. Williams had never heard of such a complaint ; so Bella, when she found herself sleepless, apprehensive of everything, and depressed to irrepressible tears, morally shook herself, and prescribed a claret-glass of port (the claret-glasses of the 'thirties were at least as big as sugar-basins) at 11 A.M. ; and presently, though she was perfectly just, dismissed Sally George for frights and tremors which she had often felt herself.

Only that fool, Sally, talked about them.

Then, presently, time and nature had their way. There was much more white than black now in Miss Ward's still abundant hair ; but the handsome face took on again its old, sensible serenity. At last, the thought of her own failure to save him and of the mental agonies he must have suffered to prefer death before them, lost their exceeding bitterness. Then the coarse talk about him in Marlingford, which enraged her because it was mostly true, died down. She saw a generation rising who had never heard his name and, but vaguely, his story ; while the letter his sister had written, piously resigned to the manner of his going, so that he went, had, it seemed to Bella Ward, cut him off from the last person in the world to whom he had been anything.

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To which that astute little lawyer, Cole, made instant answer, 'Oh, but she's different !'

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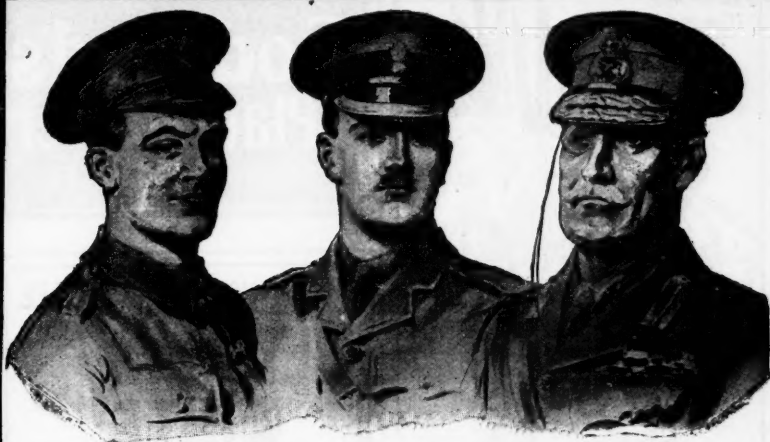
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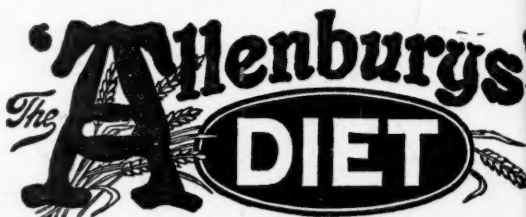
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